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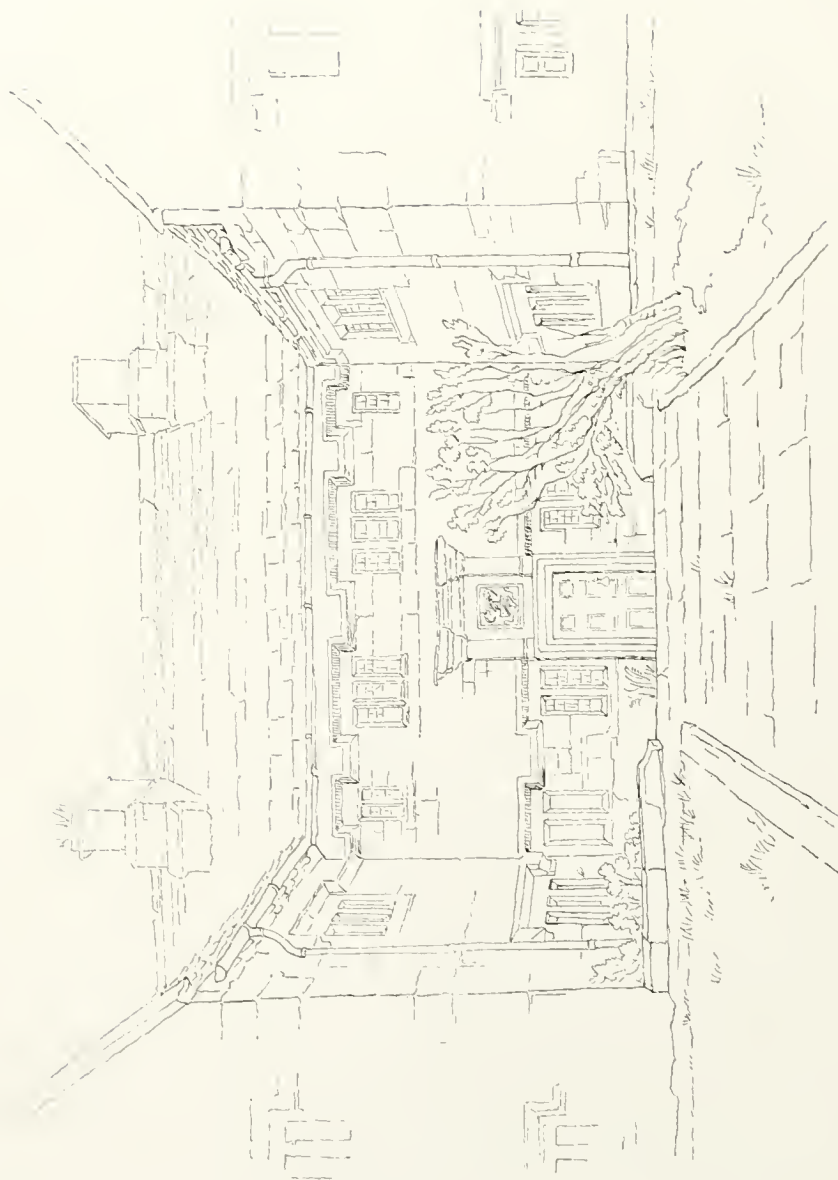
## CHANGES AND CHANCES

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THE NEVINSONS' OLD HOME AT NEWBY, IN WESTMORLAND

*From a Drawing by the Author*



# CHANGES AND CHANCES

BY  
HENRY W. NEVINSON



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## PREFACE

I HAVE always liked the Collect which prays that, among the sundry and manifold changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found. To recognise a guiding mark above all the tempest and flux of time must bestow an encouraging sense of security, such as mariners feel when they perceive the flash of a revolving light, though frequently concealed by waves. To be sure, opinions differ innumera- bly as to what may be true joys, and how they should be approached. The author of the prayer tells us the way to win them is by loving the thing which God commands and desiring that which He promises ; and I suppose that for the author the joys consisted, not so much in the pleasures of a heaven foreseen by expectation, but in a love, obedience, and worship that would illuminate the passing course of his daily life. Others have sought true joys in the pursuit of scientific knowledge, the invention of mechanism for speed or manufacture, the creation of beauty, the service of their country or of mankind, and even, they tell us, of devoted love for one particular person. Some years ago I heard of a Duke who seemed to have inherited all the advantages possible for a human being, but declared in the end that eating and drinking were the only joys both true and permanent. Indeed, it is obvious that most people who possess wealth sufficient for a life of pleasure regard the pleasures of such a life as true joys, for otherwise they would not pursue them with such absorbing zeal. Whereas for the enormous majority of people in every country the main pursuit of their lives is to live.

And so the objects of the prayer become rather vague, and, amid such variety of opinion and practice, who shall decide where those joys are to be found? Moralists might tell us that even the Duke could have discovered joys truer and more permanent than eating and drinking, if only he had set himself to some useful or beautiful task, such as mowing his lawn or singing in the village choir. And once when, during a great railway strike, I heard that a member of the House of Lords was milking goats in Hyde Park, I thought that probably it was the happiest day in his life. But if the Duke or the Lord were to disagree with the moralists or myself, who could bring persuasion to change their minds? The place where a mathematician or inventor finds his joys would be no place for me, and where the heart of a chess-player or card-player is surely fixed, I would rather die at once than live. So that in the end I am driven back upon my own experience in a long life, marked by sundry and manifold changes, and disturbed by unruly will and desires.

I have certainly found true joys springing up along the edges of many different paths, but never for the seeking or "according to plan." Suddenly and unexpectedly they have appeared. It has been as the poet said, when singing of love's incredible reality :

*"Unmöglich scheint immer die Rose,  
Unbegreiflich die Nachtigal."*

But I have learnt that unless I was following certain paths, these true joys never appeared at all. As to what those paths might be, I must go back to the old Greek definition of happiness as "The exercise of vital powers along lines of excellence, in a life affording them scope." Unless I have been moving along such a path, all the attendant joys—love, beauty, and delight in nature—have either disappeared or have taken on a dull and sickly hue, like leaves shrivelled by a cold spring. Indeed, a departure from such paths, or an obstacle blocking the road, has often been sufficient to



kill the wayside joys of love, beauty, and delight in nature altogether.

There must be millions of young men and women who are now passing through similar experience, and perhaps some of them would like to hear about the course of a traveller preceding them. But there are two other reasons for writing these chapters of memory. Probably to most people it seems a pity that one's days should pass—yesterday and yesterday and yesterday—dissolving without record or memorial into what Sir Thomas Browne has called “the uncomfortable night of nothing.” Each day of everybody's life is a miracle, more inexplicable and incalculable than the daily miracle of sunrise and sunset. To everybody it brings a commingled host of thoughts, feelings, and emotions—pains, pleasures, annoyances, anxieties, hopes or disappointments. To everybody, except the few who can afford to dwell in hermit caves or on the tops of pillars, and who avail themselves of those advantages, it brings connection with other people—fellow-workers or fellow-idlers, allies or enemies, friends or relations. Even for the most torpid, the day is crowded with sensations ; and even the most energetic enjoy, I suppose, brief intervals of calm. It is nearly incredible that all the vital experiences of to-day will by to-morrow have become a blank of nonentity, like the sums a child washes from a slate, irrevocable as the million ages before man made himself. It seems an extravagant waste, a lamentable squandering. And so a book of memories like this becomes an attempt to clutch at transitory time before it whirls into oblivion. It is a fond endeavour to retard that hurrying chariot, to grasp the vanishing shadow, and with Faust to cry to the moment : “ *Verweile doch, du bist so schön !* ” Or if the moment be not fair but grisly, still one would not have it blotted out for ever.

And then, as Arthur Ponsonby observes in his “English Diaries,” egoism comes in too. In his Essays, so full of autobiography, Montaigne tells us he felt a passionate desire to make himself known. Anyone who has felt a

mythical reputation growing up around him would like to strip it off, as one would strip the creepers and crawlers from an ancient building. In my own case, for instance, I should have thought that anyone who knew me would have discerned that the curses of my life have been shyness, timidity, hesitation, a weak compliance, and a balance of judgment tormenting in its exactness. But I have evidence that such reputation as may have gathered around me appears to be strangely contrary to the truth. For when my son, the artist, once applied to the Foreign Office for a *visa* on his passport, the official asked him: "Are you related to that man, Henry Nevinson?" "He is my father," Richard replied. "He's a man of very violent opinions, isn't he?" asked the official. "Oh dear, no!" said Richard, having known me from his childhood; "he's the mildest of men." "When I say violent opinions," the official explained, "I mean he doesn't see eye to eye with the man in the street. Now, does he?" Only what Ministers call an answer in the negative was possible, and the *visa* was refused, but our language was enriched by an official definition of violence unsurpassed in precision.

In this record, which includes many people whom I have known or met, I have been obliged to drop titles and similar appendages, simply because so many of my friends have won such distinctions that, like panting time, I toil after them in vain. I ask them all to excuse my apparent bluntness, for even if I could follow the heights which they have reached, the repeated insertion of "(Now Lord So-and-So, or now K.B.E.)" makes heavy reading.

The two chapters called "A Merchant of London" and "Sabrina Fair" have appeared in almost the same form in my book, "Between the Acts" (originally published by John Murray), and are here included by permission of Messrs. Duckworth, the present publishers of that book.

H. W. N.

LONDON, 1923.

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# CHANGES AND CHANCES

## CHAPTER I

### THE MIDLAND FIELDS

*"L'homme arrive novice à chaque âge de la vie."*—CHAMFORT.

I WAS not born in Arcadia. The only praise that I ever heard visitors give to my native town of Leicester was that it was clean. They always said that, and they said no more. All that they could see was a collection of dull streets with little, red-brick, slated houses for the workers in the hosiery, elastic-web, and boot factories; a few old ruins, not very picturesque; a few old inns and churches; a Temperance Hall for dreary meetings; a pitiful Museum of stuffed birds and Roman "remains"; and an unusual number of Nonconformist chapels. The country around was to them equally uninteresting—a sluggish little river, hardly distinguishable from the sluggish little canal with which it was sometimes merged; monotonous or slightly undulating fields, stretching far away to north, east, and south, divided by hedgerows with hedgerow trees, and appreciated by fox hunters alone; on the west a few insignificant hills, interspersed with granite quarries and insignificant coal mines, hardly worth the working. As to society! No wonder our visiting relations always looked happier and happier as the hour of their departure approached. I can now imagine the satisfaction with which they watched their luggage being strapped securely upon the top of their railway carriage (the custom of those days), and with what a sigh of relief they sank into their

seats as the train began to move. Like the sweet little girl who, after tender adieus and embraces to her family upon the platform, concluding with the wave of damp pocket handkerchiefs, was heard to sigh as she drew up the window : "Thank Gord ! I'm shut of *that* lot ! "

No doubt, the town and country were dull, and so were we. There was a theatre, but we never went to it, well knowing it to stand upon the road to hell. There were dances in winter, but we never learnt to dance, for the devil lurked even in quadrilles. There was a Free Library, but we never took out a book, though my father was on the Committee, and when it met, late dinner was at six instead of five-thirty. Our secular reading was almost limited to ancient volumes of the "Penny Magazine," and the current number of the "Sunday at Home," which usually had a religious story in it besides the page of sermon called "The Pulpit in the Family." I am not sure that even my father read that, though he studied the monthly publication very carefully before turning to less devotional volumes upon flint implements and other relics of the Stone Age. Which indeed he loved, for he was a born antiquary, always on the search for arrow-heads and spear-heads, but never finding one ; any more than he found the bones of Richard III, when the little river was drained beneath Bow Bridge, where they were reputed to have been thrown ; or the bones of Cardinal Wolsey among the ruins of the Abbey, where he certainly died, and is at the present time (spring, 1923), perhaps, being excavated at last.

The "Arabian Nights" were banned, probably as "immoral," though we were never told the shameful reason. Fairy stories were banned because they were untrue. In my early teens I bought a Shakespeare in one volume, but my mother was so full of horror at finding it that I hid it away. "It is a great immoral book," she said to me, in one of her rare outbursts of feeling ; "I know some people put it next the Bible, but that is mere wickedness." Soon afterwards I ordered a Latin copy of the

“*Imitatio Christi*” at a shop in the big market-place. But the bookseller told my father, and he stopped the order, in one of his rare outbursts of rage. For the book was Popish, and hatred of “the Bishop of Rome and all his detestable enormities” devoured him. It made him forget flint implements. It blinded him to the beauty of church architecture, for which, being himself an excellent draughtsman, he had a deep and natural feeling. He dated the ruin of England from the Catholic Emancipation Act. He never crossed the Channel for fear of seeing crucifixes or other idols, and mixing with the damned. One day, while passing with him the Catholic church in the New Walk, we were conscious of a priest standing in the strip of garden. Shuddering with painful curiosity, I glanced at a man whose soul could not possibly escape being burnt for ever and ever ; but my father averted his eyes, as I have always done from an execution. For he was a sympathetic man, and would run to comfort any child crying in the street.

He never discussed religious subjects with us, for in the home circle we did not venture upon subjects at all. But he would speak of them quite freely with any innkeeper or commercial traveller we met ; and every waiter or sexton who had the wit to denounce the Papacy or Ritualistic practices was sure of a material reward. An even stronger passion than his hatred of the Papists was his detestation of the “Puseyites” or “Tractarians,” whom he regarded as traitors in the camp of the Protestant God. When to the beautiful old church of St. Mary, which we attended, my Uncle Tom presented an eagle lectern so placed that the praying-desk had to be moved sideways, thus enabling the clergy to turn to the east at the Creed, we stalked out of our pew for ever, and sought a refuge for spirit and truth in the most hideous church of England that existed. Lacerated by savage wrath, my father shut himself up in the dining-room to write to the local paper upon the abominable innovation, and for some weeks we all lived tremulously in a Valley of Shadow. It was almost as bad when the



Infirmary, of which he was a Governor, put the nurses into uniform. He at once resigned, dreading lest the matrons should be called Sisters (which indeed happened), and Papish doctrine be insinuated like a poisonous morphia into the sick. Yet even in matters religious he was capable of tolerance. For when he took me up to Christ Church, we beheld a venerable figure in Tom Quad being conducted in scarlet robes to the Cathedral by another venerable figure who bore a silver rod with a little bird on the top. "Now, I don't much object to that," my father said; "that is the old High Church; so different from these new-fangled Tractarians." Alas! the more important of those two venerable figures was Dr. Pusey himself.

I forgot to include among the works of fiction permitted to us a series of twelve death-bed scenes, called "The Family Sepulchre," which we were allowed to read even on Sunday, because of their edifying nature. For they told us how in the hour of death the Evangelical Protestant beholds the heavens open and hears the angels call, while from the boiling, flaming hell below his feet all the devils, leaving for a moment their natural prey, clutch at his parting soul in vain. But what should we want with fiction or any other book when the Bible always lay open before us, written by the finger of God Himself, and true in every syllable? A cultivated woman recently informed me that she intended to bring up her children upon the Bible so that they might acquire what she called a "pure Anglo-Saxon style." Style! Read the Bible for style! Glory be to God, my parents had never heard of style! To them the Bible was the one, the only, the complete message and revelation of God to man. From "In the beginning" to the last stop of the "Revelation" there was not a word, not a comma, even in the translation, that was not directly inspired. To quote it irreverently was blasphemy; to question it was the sin against the Holy Ghost, that has no forgiveness. No book might be laid upon a Bible. If a Bible fell to the ground, there was a hush as though the heavens fell. Every morning

and evening my father read a chapter to the family and the three maids, and if one of the giddy girls laughed at some quaint passage (such as the wiles of Abraham or Jacob), whither was she **only** too likely to go ? Every morning we children had to learn verses from the Psalms or Isaiah or the Sermon on the Mount by heart, and if we did not learn much beside, why should we ?

We lived in proud and quiet seclusion, as became gentle-folk on pilgrimage through this brief life to an eternity of bliss or woe. We were allowed to consort with the families of clergy (Low church clergy), doctors, and military officers. But we were heartily glad there was only one family of each class, numbering nine children all together, and of those we disliked five. The Vicar of St. Margaret's, it is true, had four or five children, one of whom was to become stroke of the Lincoln eight, and the beloved Canon Lloyd Jones, of Peterborough and Northampton ; and another the well-known magistrate, writer, and mother of my son, the painter. But we were not intimate with them because their father was High Church and put his choir into surplices. The other inhabitants of the town we divided into vulgar manufacturers, easy objects of satire, and the "lower classes," of whom we knew nothing.

Every now and then my father would complain that the politicians were making the lower classes our masters, and something inside me would move in blind protest. But we never discussed the subject, for we avoided all controversial discussion ; and I think our one connection with the working people was a Blanket Society, for which my father, my mother, and, in later times, my sister copied addresses into vast folios year after year in singularly clear and beautiful handwriting, worthy to be preserved as an example of Victorian industry. For the rest, the questions of Labour, the Trade Union movement, the strikes, the rivalries of capital and co-operation smouldered around us unobserved or condemned.

As to public entertainments, we once went to a Panorama

of Scotland, once to Professor Pepper's Ghost, and once to a real circus, where a man climbed up an inclined spiral upon a star-spangled globe. But such gaieties were not repeated. Our three and only regular amusements were :

(1) The Yeomanry review upon the race-course, when amid general excitement the whole line charged with increasing rapidity at each of three bugle calls.

(2) The Flower Show, also upon the race-course, smelling of flowers, fruit, and sawdust, and resounding to the boom and bang of a military band.

(3) The annual Missionary Meeting, held in the ancient Guildhall, in which Shakespeare, the immoral writer above mentioned, was supposed to have acted.

I remember no other entertainment until I was nearly grown up, when Mendelssohn's Oratorios were introduced in the Temperance Hall.

In such surroundings, childhood might seem to some people dull and unhappy, but mine was far from dull, far from unhappy. The very strictness provided moments of excitement, as when my ungoverned rage drove the nurse-maid downstairs crying, "Please, Mum, Master 'Enery's got his tantrums again!" And somehow romance crept in. On most days my mother sent me on errands into the town, and I scudded through the streets at full gallop, partly in pride of speed, but chiefly because I was a secret messenger bearing orders of deadly import. From the earliest years I was possessed by a passionate longing, not so much for solitude as for the wilderness. A verse in one of our numerous hymns ran :

*" Could I but find some cave unknown  
Where human foot had never trod,  
Yet there I should not be alone,  
On every side there would be God."*

To the last two lines I was indifferent, but I loved the first two, repeating them to myself as a wish instead of a condition. For the same reason I loved the line "O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent," for we used to sing

that hymn, not being aware of its dangerous authorship. My mother used to say, "I know you'll be a hermit and live among the rocks," and no lot seemed to me more enviable, except perhaps a wandering tinker's. So when at last it was decided that the Bible was insufficient knowledge for this Vale of Tears, and I was sent to a curate for Latin, Greek, and spelling, I readily joined a gang for the destruction of windows and gas-lamps, imagining myself a freebooter or march-trooper. The curate himself was partly responsible for this perilous element of romance, for he lent me all the novels of Walter Scott bound up in one huge volume, which I hugged about with me like a ponderous nugget of gold. The same curate thrashed Latin grammar into his boys with more pitiless violence than I have ever seen in any school or regiment ; but he perceived the beauty of Virgil, and through Virgil he gave me my first inkling of beauty in literature. They tell me he still lives, as vicar of a London church. If so, I thank him both for his sense of beauty and for his violence. In comparison with him, no human being has ever seemed to me terrific.

But more deeply rooted than the sense of beauty in literature, though in later years inextricably mixed with it, was my passion for what is called Nature. Through the dullish country that surrounded the town I ranged hungrily searching for any gleam of wildness, and, with almost unendurable delight, sometimes finding it—in a gorse-grown hollow between Stoughton and Houghton-on-the-Hill, or in the woods of Billesdon Coplow, or in a bit of marsh near Blaby, or in Groby Pool, where I learnt to skate, slithering over the five miles to and fro along the frozen Ashby road ; or when we drove out every spring to see the hyacinths there, blue among the trees as the water itself. And beyond Groby rose "the Forest" in low hills of ancient granite—Bradgate and Old John, Swithland, Buddon Wood, and the summit of Bardon itself, rising 800 feet above the sea and looking far over the Midland plains. And near by was the Trappist monastery, where no one spoke, except the Guest-



Master, who once, when we asked the time, replied, "Time is the dog that barks us all to hell," an observation which none of us doubted was to be fulfilled in his case. My profound and solemn delight in wandering about that insignificant range of hills, now being rapidly dug away for paving stones, was probably then quite common, as was the painful yearning with which I would watch the sun setting behind them while I stood on the Leicester race-course (now Victoria Park) looking over the town. One may find both in Wordsworth, in Ruskin, and in other minds of that passionate century. One finds them in Faust when he pours out the utterance of longing under the sunset of Easter Day :

*"Ich eile fort, ihr ew'ges Licht zu trinken,  
Vor mir der Tag und hinter mir die Nacht,  
Der Himmel über mir und unter mir die Wellen."*

Faust goes on to say that this yearning is inborn in every human being. It may still be so, but I do not find it often now expressed. Perhaps because only the great poets can ever express it, and our poets now find their inspiration in quite different emotions.

Mountains have always brought to me that passionate yearning—that leap of the heart—more intimate and painful than the rainbow or the sea or the stars can give. Perhaps it may only come from early association with those low Charnwood hills, but I like to trace it to distant forefathers who lived for centuries among the Westmorland mountains. Five or six times I have been to visit their old home—their latest home. It stands about five miles north-east of Shap, and is still called Newby Hall, though only a small Jacobean house of grey and yellow stone, with grey and yellow stone roof. It is built in three sides of a small quadrangle, and a terra-cotta plaque, probably of later date, shows the family arms above the door, which opens direct into the hall. On one side of the hall, which probably served as drawing-room and dining-room combined, gapes the vast fireplace of the house. Upstairs are five or six small bedrooms and one long,



dark storeroom, where nothing but a ghost is now stored. The "Manor" has sunk or risen to being a farm-house, with a few acres of garden and field, all absorbed into the Lonsdale property over a century ago, I believe. The adjoining field shows some trace of having been once laid out as a "pleasaunce," and across the village road there appears to have been a training ground or ride for horses. I like to think of the long-nosed, quick-blooded Nevinsons who handed on to me the torch of life, living there in secluded state, riding their shaggy horses, cultivating the garden, being christened, married, and buried in the old village church of Morland close by (the more distinguished were carried to Carlisle Cathedral itself), and wondering what on earth was going to happen when Prince Charlie and his men came straggling down the high-road five miles to the west, or dragging back, to be knocked to pieces near Clifton, just over the watershed beyond Lowther. But most I like to imagine them seeing the sun rise daily over Cross Fell, Lune Forest, and the Vale of Eden, or watching him set beyond the peaks and shoulders of Helvellyn, Saddleback, and Skiddaw. Not that I suppose the sight, being only a daily miracle, interested them much, but perhaps the glory and wonder of it passed imperceptibly into our blood.

For this, or for some other vague reason, it made all a year's difference to me whether our month's holiday was to be among mountains or upon the flats. The choice of place was always a matter of controversy and delicate manipulation. For the final decision lay with my father, as was right, seeing that he paid; and the surest way of obtaining our secret desire was to urge upon him the very places we were least inclined to, and to depreciate the object of our wish. By this simple device we usually succeeded, and I still mark each year of my boyhood by the name of the place where he had lodgings or stayed with relations—Whitby, Llandudno, Weymouth, Yarmouth, Llanfairfechan (mountains), Harrogate and a drive in private yellow coaches with my Yorkshire grandfather up to Ambleside (mountains), Deilamer Forest

(where an uncle had a vicarage and bred great mastiffs), Innellan on the Clyde (where another uncle had a house and boat), and, best of all Barmouth, where the mountains were close at hand, with Cader, most beautiful of all mountains, only just across the Mawddaeh estuary. One year, for some forgotten reason, I was left behind, alone with kindly relatives, and the silently suppressed but appalling misery of my solitude and disappointment was enough to create such a "complex" as would baffle psycho-analysis.

Obviously, we were a bourgeois family of the commonest kind—respectable, exclusive, moderate in means, Conservative, uncultured, and God-fearing. We had very numerous relations, all of whom I detested, except one, with whom I was passionately in love from five years old till her death eighteen years later. We knew hardly anyone besides. We had governesses chosen for their family misfortunes rather than for their knowledge or ability to teach. We were acquainted with no literature but the Bible, and no serious subject but Evangelical religion, which my intensely devout and thoughtful sister used to expound to me after we were in bed and I was longing for sleep. We were dressed decently, and, I have no doubt, hideously. We were regularly fed, but the food was carefully selected and cooked so as not to be tempting, lest we should eat too much, and fall into the sin of gluttony. The ordinary bodily functions were not mentioned among us except in shamefaced whispers; sex was unknown, and I never felt the smallest trace of the ludicrous "complex" named after tragic old Oedipus. Could any childhood be less attractive to the modern mind? Yet I detect advantages in it, commonplace though it was.

## CHAPTER II

### A LONDON MERCHANT

*"I thank the goodness and the grace  
That on my birth have smiled,  
And set me in this Christian place,  
A happy English child."*—ENGLISH HYMN

TO me, looking back on the times when I used to come up from the country as a child to my grandfather's house near London, one event in the day's routine always seems especially distinctive. It was as essential as the peculiar smell of the old house itself—that fragrant mixture of flowers, spices, resin, and I don't know what besides. I mean the event of family prayers, so different from our rites at home, and so much more alarming. For with us the head of the family performed the worship throughout, but at my grandfather's they "read round," so that even the youngest and feeblest was compelled to take a terrifying share. At half-past eight the butler clanged a great brass bell where it might be heard through bedrooms, gardens, and fields, and I have known grown-up women shed tears when they were late for that bell's warning. Into the long dining-room the sons and daughters of the house entered by one door, and when they were ranged on chairs around the breakfast china, the lower door opened, admitting the retainers in file according to rank, the housekeeper coming first and the butler last, like the non-commissioned officers acting as guides to a company on parade. All took their seats, the women on chairs, the men on a bench covered with green baize, and the ceremony began.

Let us imagine it a morning in the middle 'sixties. For

though my grandfather—my mother's father—lived to a good age, perhaps he was never quite at his best after eighty-five. In appearance he had a notable look of Scott, though his only connection with literature was a large sum he had once paid a publisher for bringing out a posthumous work by some evangelical relation, perhaps a brother, for he was the youngest of nineteen. The work ran to twelve volumes, and was called "Lives of Eminent Christians." The tie of blood compelled all the family to read it, though to us it was even more dreary than "The Family Sepulchre," before mentioned. In all literature our family standard would now be thought rather rigid. It is true I once heard my grandfather recite the "Meeting of the Waters," after the two o'clock dinner, with great pleasure and tenderness, but everyone looked at the dessert plates as though wondering what was coming next. No poem of Byron's was allowed in the house, and for the poet himself he felt a regretful abhorrence as a lost soul from Britain's aristocracy. I have been told of a sterner and more practical criticism still. Once when my aunts were young (incredible time!) he conducted them all—I suppose to the old Pump Room, or to the Holly Bush Assembly Hall at Hampstead, where "conversaziones" were held—to hear Joanna Baillie recite one of her "Plays of the Passions." I do not know which passion was the dramatist's theme, but the very title ought to have been warning enough. In the midst of the recitation he rose, and to the word of command, "My dears, this is no fit place for you!" he led his four daughters out in file from the dubious haunt of culture back to the security of their home, leaving the astonished poetess to express what passions she pleased. It is not for any dangerously passionate tendencies that people refrain from reading Joanna Baillie now.

A violent Evangelical by conviction, he nevertheless remained an unflinching Tory, owing to some ancestor's reputed service to King Charles, whose star, as seen in Vandyke portraits, hung framed above the drawing-room



door, with inscriptions : "Given by King Charles I to Captain Basil Woodd on the Scaffold." Next to the Pope of Rome, he probably hated Gladstone most of human things, and I well remember once after prayers how, springing up from his knees and holding the "Times" instead of the Bible in his hand, he exclaimed to the assembled household : "The Lords have saved England again ! The Lords have saved England again ! I always knew they would." Whereat everyone was much gratified, and in the kitchen the servants all said with pride that master had been right as usual. As an emblem of his politics and position, he always wore a tall hat, even in the garden while he fed his pet ducks ; and he went shooting in it upon the moors of his native Yorkshire. For he was a great sportsman, and travelled North every August in his own carriages with his setters and pointers, well content if he could bag a few brace after each long day's toiling behind the dogs. On the walls of the dining-room hung pictures of one or two favourite horses, still kept in service, though long past their work. And side by side with the horses were comfortable portraits of himself and my grandmother in middle-aged prosperity. In other rooms were crayon drawings of my aunts, with long white necks like gentle swans, and wavy "ringlets" surrounding the innocently smiling heads. It never even occurred to me that my aunts once really looked like that. To me they were but relics of the dark abysmal age before I was born—beings whose natural destiny it was to discuss the various ailments of myself and my cousins. Yet the portraits were said to be their "very image," and, indeed, my aunts were younger when I first remember them than I have been for many years. They would still sometimes stand together around the piano, and after a prolonged selection of a keynote, would sing "Phyllis is my only joy," or "Tell me, Shepherds, have you seen my Flora pass this way ?" One of them could sing both first and second. But then my mother used to tell me that this aunt had always been the clever



one ; and as she had eleven children and five step-children to bring up she needed all her wits.

To return to the scene of worship round the breakfast table. If a clergyman was present, he was expected to occupy the green leather arm-chair at the top of the assembly, to read the first verse, and, when the chapter was finished, to supply a moral commentary out of his own head. Or, if the eldest son was staying in the house, he took the place of honour, because he was a Member of Parliament. But he was not bound to give his own commentary, and in the ordinary way my grandfather, being only a layman and a merchant, never trusted himself beyond the printed limits of an eighteenth-century divine, who must have written something commonplace upon every chapter in the Bible. For we read the books straight through, omitting only the genealogies, the Levitical law, the indecent passages, and the Psalms ; and that commentary never failed.

When my grandfather had finished his verse, which he read in a deep, full voice, calling to my mind the Day of Judgment, the next senior member of the family took up the tale. With a little calculation I could fix which lines would come to me, and spell them out beforehand. I have no doubt now that others did the same, but at the time I never supposed that anyone else could be so wicked. If the worst came to the worst, and I stuck helplessly at a word, my grandfather would suddenly throw in the due correction, making me jump with shame, though the maids used to tell me afterwards I was a very pretty little reader ; by which I know now that they meant I had light, wavy hair. My turn safely over, I could settle down to listen to the mistakes of others with the relief of him who has swum to land and watches the others swim. As a rule the servants came next below me, the interval between two tall windows naturally separating them from the family. At their head sat the housekeeper—whether maid or widow no one ever asked, but of human things she seemed the

most maidenly. She read her verse in a thin and fugitive voice, like the wind among the reeds. A delicate curl just shook at each temple, and on her head fluttered the super-sensual essence of a cap. Her home was the "storeroom," pleasantest room in all the house, for the air was laden with the smell of dried fruits and coffee and nutmegs, and one could climb on the top of the eupboards. There she would read us comfortable tales from the "Sunday at Home"—"The Gospel in Cæsar's Household" was her best—but to herself she always read the Marriage Service.

Second to her in rank came Jane, the cook, the "gentle giantess" of the estate. She had entered the family as a child, had been taught her letters by the "young ladies," had grown fat on happiness and faithful work through an indefinite age, and only left at last for a misery of marriage. Huge as she was, she could only send the tiniest whisper of a voice across the room, and it was generally during her verse that the critical moment of the ceremony came. For the old coachman, being very deaf at the best, and not hearing a sound of any kind whilst Jane was reading, always thought the time had come for him to begin. So far he had been following the verses with his enormous finger on a principle of averages which never worked out right. But now with a deep, harsh voice, like a raven's croak, he would break in upon the giantess's gasping whisper, and repeat some Biblical truth which we had passed a stage or two before. On one side the scullery-maid would tug his coat-sleeves, on the other the gardener stamped on his toes; but, outside the stable, all the old man's senses lay very deep down and worked but slowly, so that he had generally toiled through two or three lines before he could be brought to stand. We all looked a little uneasy, but from first to last I never saw a smile on any-one's face.

The "maids" were naturally a more variable class than the older retainers. As a rule there were perhaps five or six of them, but only one remains distinctly in my mind.

For it so happened I was present at two scenes in her career. Soon after she came, my grandfather told her, as a householder should, that he could forgive breakages, if only they were confessed. For a moment she stood hesitating on the edge of the Turkey carpet, and then all in one breath she gave some such list as this : " Please, sir, I've broke two cups and five saucers and a bedroom jug and a wine-bottle and a big pie-dish and a little pie-dish." Then she paused, conscious of rectitude, but with apron half raised in deprecation. When she was gone, my grandfather only said, " That seems to be an honest girl." But in the second scene, her apron covered her face. It was wet in semi-transparent patches, and things were said which I did not understand.

Among the elder male retinue my terror was old Forbes, the gardener, who sat next below the deaf coachman. Into this wilderness of misery he had come, and whilst here it was his destiny to make it blossom like the rose. That destiny he fulfilled, but no trace of satisfaction was ever seen upon his brown and crabbled face. On the lawns or in the hothouses he laboured from morn till eve, always with the same rapt look, as one occupied with the burning depths of eternity that fumed below the garden beds. Year after year he wore an old Scotch cap with a check border and no tails. That was his standard, his battle-flag, a quite unnecessary emblem of his superior nationality, marking him out as one of the elect in a heathen land. I am quite sure he would have shed his blood for any of the family with sour but unhesitating self-sacrifice. Otherwise he seemed to despise all men and women about equally, reserving a special detestation for us children. Yet perhaps it was rather with indifference than contempt that he regarded grown-up mankind, as careless bodies whirling to their own place, and in their brief passage conspiring to spoil his gardens by their carnal appetites. To them at times he may have extended a fellow-mortal's pity. But in children he saw nothing except living examples

of original sin. Born in sin and children of wrath we undoubtedly were, and our predestination was all on one side. In us he only beheld brands meet for the burning, and even when I was set to help him by weeding a gravel path with a rusty oyster-knife, he neglected that corner of the garden for a week rather than look at me. I never heard him speak to any of the other retainers, and except for his verse in the morning, he spent whole days in absolute silence. Of all his duties the hardest must have been to allot and label the various gooseberry bushes granted every spring to the "maids" for their special delight. A woman in the garden reminded him of the First Sin, but from the days of Paradise no better gardener, however much thwarted by Eve, toiled at the earth under which his earcase was to lie, while he sang among the angels. He read his verse with harsh emphasis, like the grating of un-oiled machinery. Every sentence of the Bible was to him a word from the Book of Seven Seals, and he would have converted the Song of Solomon itself into a condemnation of this transitory universe.

Next him sat Charlie, the carpenter, who commanded the long woodshed and the glories of the sawpit, in the depths of which it was easy with a few rough logs to build old Crusoe's hut, or an Indian wigwam, or such a fort as mutinous sepoy never could have stormed. So Charlie was my friend and hero, till one evil day he found me flat beside the pond, fishing out newts with my boot for net. It was part of his labour to clean the family boots, and I think he never spoke to me again. Long afterwards I dimly remember hearing that he vanished into Canadian forests with his brother Jem—a sterner man, who controlled the cows and other bisons, and drove them up to milk.

Others came—young Sam, the coachman's son, who used to wash the tears off my face with his handkerchief, licking it first, when I cut my finger in weeding—and others again whom I can hardly recall, except in fever.



Last came, and first did go, the model butler, most polite and alert of men, always unruffled, with duty always fulfilled before the shadow of command had risen on his master's face. His eye was like a spaniel's, ever on the watch, and for all the world he had a smile and a kindly word. Nurses and housemaids alike adored him, and many a time they stood calling the higher powers to witness their admiration while he tossed me up to the pantry ceiling. I do not forget the feeling of awe, as at the opening of a sudden abyss, when I heard it whispered one morning that he had been found drunk upon his bedroom floor, dressed, and with the lamp still burning. So ruin came, first slowly, then more fast, till one day my mother sorrowfully told us that the best of servants had died in a country ditch.

When the disjointed reading was finished, all books were shut, and the commentary was listened to with minds vacant and at rest. That over, we turned round to kneel, amid a feminine rustle of silk from my aunts and stiff cotton from the maids. With faces pressed to the backs of the chairs, we waited while a long prayer was read. Then all broke into "Our Father" with a mixture of basses and trebles, that I was once well shaken for describing as "giving tongue." In that repetition the deaf coachman went his own pace, and was generally left finishing "for ever and ever" after the blessing had been pronounced. We rose, and there was a pause while the servants demurely left the room. It was the established custom for one of the elder members then to make a leading remark so as to bridge the gulf between the eternities and the breakfast-table. If the Member of Parliament was there, the remark was expected to be political. Otherwise it usually turned on a missionary meeting, the weather, or the abominations of "the Tractarians," who, in my mind, were intimately connected with the fires of Smithfield as depicted in a terrific "Book of Martyrs," the only really interesting volume in my grandfather's large library.



It is a scene from a vanished past. Except a few middle-aged children now scattered far and wide through the world, nearly all who witnessed it have already gone. In a few years the Christian feudalism which gave it character will seem as remote as the Crusades. In a few years no one will remember the look of that furniture or the sweet and separate smell of each room. The house itself at the summit of Haverstoek Hill has been altered and is doomed. The prairies, the desert islands, the enchanted caves and forests of its gardens and fields are now divided into plots for monotonous streets of residential villas and flats, which not even a child's imagination can ever fill with cannibals or fairies of the green. And that is why for a moment I recall it from the abyss across which only the beating of Time's wings are heard.

### CHAPTER III

#### ON THE EDGE OF THE PIT

*"Nessun maggior dolore  
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice  
Nella miseria; e ciò sa il tuo dottore."*—"Inferno," v, 121.

FRANCESCA'S words are true to satiety, and, no doubt, Virgil knew their truth. But he knew the truth of their converse too. "O passi graviora"; "Olim meminisse"—yes, he knew the converse. He knew the consolation of remembering unhappier things, and I suppose nearly everyone can console himself by similar memories. When Fortune looked her grimmest, I have sometimes reflected with pleasure on the misery of my first school.

Everyone except officials feels a poignant commiseration for the boys and girls whom in England we herd together in institutions, and, indeed, for all human beings—prisoners, workhouse paupers, lunatics, and others—who suffer what philanthropists call "institutional treatment." But perhaps I have felt it more than others, for, to some extent, I have myself known their wretched state. The school to which I was first sent was built and organised on the model of those institutions, and therefore was, as I hope, the very worst school in the country, except the workhouse schools, the industrial schools, the reformatories, and similar abominations maintained by the State, the municipality, or voluntary subscriptions. The pious founder of that school had unfortunately married a distant relation of my father, and that seemed a sufficient reason why we three brothers should be sent there, to encourage family interests. When I was sent with my younger brother, our elder had

already been there for eight out of the ten years he spent learning nothing, though he possessed unusual natural abilities, including an infallible memory and acute observation of nature. He was then already in the Sixth Form, and the second boy in the school ; but before he could pass the matric. into one of the least exacting colleges in Oxford, he had to spend a year or so at a special crammer's, and in Oxford it took him many years to obtain a pass degree. Of his peculiarly scientific and musical mind nothing was made, and what he accomplished in after life as an entomologist and musician was all accomplished in spite of his training. His failure to accomplish more was mainly due to the slackness, ignorance, and low intellectual tone of the execrable institution itself.

Authorities in English schools may object that knowledge does not matter, and that the public school spirit is all. I should myself be inclined to consider knowledge of some importance even in public schools ; but still, everyone agrees that, fortunately for all concerned with education in those schools, knowledge is not its highest object. But for acquiring the other objects that are regarded as more important—skill in playing ball, the sporting spirit, manners, initiative, cleanliness, good-temper, endurance, happiness—what chance had we there ? Night and day no boy was ever alone. The classes were huge. Out of school we sat all together in one enormous schoolroom, except that the two highest forms had large and crowded class-rooms to themselves. No one was allowed to approach the dormitories in the daytime. They were arranged for publicity at night (the smallest holding fourteen, the largest sixty), with the idea of checking youthful vices ; which were not checked. We were known by numbers, not by names, just as convicts are. We were marched to and fro to meals in military formation, with a band. The food was bad ; the “ sick-house ” an abomination ; the “ bounds ” so narrow that we knew nothing of the surrounding country but for a dreary walk on Sundays accompanied by a dreary master ;

and the only comfort to me was that the surrounding country was wretched and suburban, hardly cheered by a distant prospect of Hampstead Heath.

It was not a good place to start life from. Even the masters were dejected as well as neglectful, and I can imagine no more pitiable fate than theirs. Two of them actually ran away—one the French master, who could endure English life no longer; the other a strange and probably interesting man, who had been long in America and used to spit at the ventilators over our heads, or into the hand of any eager pupil who held a hand out to advertise his knowledge of an answer. He knew, at all events, the geography of the United States, and beat into my head what little mathematics ever got there. The “classical master” knew a good deal of Greek, and contrived to get some of it into me as well. There was a “science master” too, but he presided over a huge form called “The Extra,” into which all the exceptionally stupid boys were shot, there to study book-keeping and similar commercial pursuits, which rendered it a degradation for us even to walk or speak with them. The head master never taught anything, but he read morning prayers at half-past six, perambulated panting from class to class at least once a day, did the caning, and otherwise occupied his leisure. The second master must have been a remarkable man. Huge, fat, and Irish, he was the very model of a burlesque abbot, and rumour whispered that he had been in the Austrian army and had killed men. Consequently he taught French to the youngest boys, and kept order with great success in the lower school. There was one terrific moment when, catching me out of bed, he uttered in deep and unctuous voice the awful words, “Fifty-three, you are degenerating! I have seen men shot for less disobedience than yours.” Also he played the organ in church, and once when a fussy little master asked him the date of some event at breakfast, he replied, “Dates? Dates? A most ungentlemanly thing to know dates!” What became of him I do not know.

Our standard in football must have been higher than in learning, for one boy, with whom I used always to go for dull walks along the road, afterwards won fame, playing for England in the international matches. And another, to whom I was passionately attached, as he was to me, made an epoch in international "Rugger." In body and mind he was an extraordinarily beautiful youth, and long after he was drowned in crossing a river in India I used to find his name mentioned in the sporting papers as marking a date in the development of football. Perhaps some aged players still remember Willie Hutchinson, but no one can remember him so well as I. For his mother must be long dead.

There was only one other human being who had good influence upon me in an institution so abhorrent that I still carefully avoid the district where the school stood. He was a German boy, many years older than myself—a queer, ungainly creature with broad face, blue eyes and yellow hair all standing on end like a revolutionist's. As a foreigner, he was fair game for every insult, but, in spite of sudden outbursts of impotent rage, his deep gentleness of nature gained him a sort of toleration, and his passion for literature, kindling a like passion in me, drew me to him, though I was half ashamed of being seen in his society. He gave me a copy of his favourite book—Palgrave's "Golden Treasury"—and with German solemnity adjured me to read Wordsworth's great ode, which he could repeat without mistake. I did not realise its beauty for many years afterwards, but I learnt all the love lyrics in the book by heart instead—all the love lyrics and Shelley's ode "To Night," which for some obscure reason I loved better even than those. Perhaps I was taken by the passion of love and the passion of wandering in the lines :

*"Blind with thine hair the eyes of day  
Kiss her until she be wearied out,  
Then wander o'er city, and sea, and land  
Touching all with thine opiate wand—  
Come, long-sought !"*



With this precious volume tucked up my back under the waistcoat so as to escape observation, I used to steal away into the old churchyard, as being the quietest place in that suburban neighbourhood, and hiding among the tombstones, I would recite "To Mary in Heaven" and "I arise from dreams of thee" to the invisible ghosts around. "O what can ail thee, knight at arms," was another that they loved to hear, and very often heard just before the clanging bell called me back to my fellow-prisoners. Sometimes, standing upon my play-box in a kind of vault underneath the main building, I used to make a long flute wail out the "Marseillaise" and various Highland songs in defiance of the listeners, who were far less patient than ghosts. And as we marched in fours across the yards at night I would watch the Pole Star with a childlike yearning, not because it marked the way home, but knowing that it shone above mountains and wild moors far away. Of the hideous and degrading years which I passed in that institution I need recall no more, but may now issue forth again on to the surface of the bright world.



## CHAPTER IV

### SABRINA FAIR

*“ High the vanes of Shrewsbury gleam,  
Islanded in Severn stream ;  
The bridges from the steepled crest  
Cross the water east and west.*

*“ The flag of morn in conqueror’s state  
Enters at the English gate ;  
The vanquished eve, as night prevails,  
Bleeds upon the road to Wales.”—“ A Shropshire Lad.”*

IN my beloved old school upon the Severn I can see now that we were not educated at all ; no scientific methods were tried upon us. I doubt if any of the masters had even heard there was such a thing as a science of education. To them education was a natural process which all decent people went through, like washing ; and their ideas upon it were unscientific as was our method of “swilling,” when we ran down naked from the bedrooms to sheds in the backyards, sluiced cold water over us with zinc basins, and then came dripping back to dry upstairs. And yet I do remember one young mathematician whose form by the end of his hour was always reduced to a flushed and radiant chaos ; and when the other masters complained, he replied that this was part of his “system.” So I suppose that he at all events was scientific, and had possibly studied “Pädagogik ” in Germany.

The others were content to teach what they had learnt, and in the same manner. Most of them were Shrewsbury boys themselves, and because Greek had been taught there for more than three centuries, they taught Greek. Of course, we had Latin too, and up to the Sixth Form our time was equally divided between the two languages ; but Latin, as

being easier and rather more connected with modern life, never ranked so high, and we turned to it with the relief which most men feel when the ladies rise from the dinner-table. Latin prose, it is true, was accounted of more value than Greek prose, and no doubt there was some unrealised reason why. I suspect that in reality it is the more difficult ; for it was the unconseious rule of our aneient tradition that of two subjects the more difficult was the better worth learning, provided always that both were entirely useless.

Of Greek our knowledge was both peeuliar and limited. We were allowed no deviees to make the language in the least interesting—no designs, or pictures, or explanations. We had no idea what the Greek plays looked like on the stage, or why Demosthenes uttered those long-winded sentenees. We knew nothing of the Dantesque pride underlying the tortured prose of Thueydides, and when a Sixth-Form master told us that the stupendous myth at the end of the “ Phaedo ” appeared to him singularly childish, we took no notice of the remark one way or the other. We only knew the passage was easy, just as Homer was easy, and a tragic chorus hard. The greater part of the school believed that Greek literature was written as a graduated series of problems for Shrewsbury boys to solve, and when a Sixth-Form boy was asked by a new master whether he did not eonsider the “ Prometheus ” a very beautiful play, he replied that he thought it contained too many weak cæsuras.

So there was nothing in the least cultured about our knowledge. No one expected to find either beauty or pleasure in what we read, and we found none. Nor were we scientific ; we neither knew nor cared how the Greek words arose, or how the aorists grew, and why there were two of them, like Castor and Pollux. After all these things do the Germans seek, but us they never troubled. Our sole duty was to convert, with absolute preeision, so much Greek into so much English. No possible shade of meaning or delicate inflection on the page was allowed to slide unnoticed. The phases of every mood with all its accompany-

ing satellites were traced with the exactness of astronomy. No one cared much about beauty of language provided the definite meaning was secure. Yet beauty sometimes came by accident, just as happiness comes, and I first learnt what style is from the renderings of the head-boy when he mounted the "rostrum." He was himself an antique Roman; his eagle nose, wide mouth, and massive chin, his low, broad brow, with black curls growing close to the square-backed head, were made to rule nations. But many years ago he died in the serviceable obscurity of a public school mastership, for which his knowledge of Greek was his only qualification. It is true he was our captain of football, but he owed that position to his Greek rather than his play.

When as a new boy I was first taken for a walk out of bounds on a Sunday afternoon by one of the upper sixth, who is still an earthly saint, we went to a hillside with a long blue vision of western mountains, and while I had no thought or eyes for anything but them, he continued to talk quietly of Greek—the significance of various forms, the most telling way of turning this meaning or that, especially, I remember, the cunning idioms by which the idea of "self" might be rendered in verse, either with emphasis or modesty. So it was. The school breathed Greek, and through its ancient buildings a Greek wind blew. To enter "Head Room"—a dim, panelled chamber which the upper sixth used as a study—was to become a scholar. I doubt if good Greek verse could be written anywhere else. Winged iambs fluttered through the air; they hung like bats along the shelves, and the dust fell in Greek particles. Now the school is moved to the further side of the river, and its grey and storied stone is exchanged for cheerful brick. Our old Head Room has become the housekeeper's parlour in some citizen's dwelling, but on the hearthstone at eventide beside her petticoats squats the imperishable Lar, real as a rat though not so formidable, and murmurs iambs to himself.

Other subjects besides Greek were taught, but no one ever learnt them. There was French, for instance, taught by an aged Englishman who had outlived three generations of mortal head masters, and, besides his wig, was supposed gradually to have acquired an artificial body that would last for ever. To us he was important because he registered the punishments, and had the reputation of a very bloodhound at detecting crime. Certainly he was the best comic reader I ever heard, and when he read prayers at night the whole school used to howl like a rising and falling wind, following the cadence of his voice. But nobody learnt French of him. Once, because I had shown him decent politeness, he assigned me a prize. I could honestly say I knew less French than anyone this side the Channel ; and yet I should never have outlived a certain stigma attaching to my imaginary knowledge of anything so paltry, if nature had not given me the power of running long distances without fatigue. But, unhappily for me, to prove that power I had to wait from summer till autumn, when the school huntsman led out his pack in white to scour the wild country west of the town—a country of yellow woods and deep pools, where water-fowl rose, and of isolated limestone hills, the promise of Wales. Each run followed a course fixed by old tradition. Foxes were seldom sent out, and were never supposed to be caught. We ran for the sake of running, just as we learnt Greek for the sake of learning it.

Mathematics were held in scarcely less contempt than French. We had two wranglers to teach us, but they never taught anyone. Their appearance in form was hailed with indecent joy. As one of the classical masters said, it was like the “Cease Fire” on a field-day, and the whole body of boys abandoned themselves at once to relaxation. In the lower forms far-sailing darts were seen floating through the air as at a spiritualist séance ; in the upper we discussed the steeplechase or did Greek verses. A boy who really knew any mathematics was regarded by ourselves and the



masters as a kind of freak. There was no dealing with him. His mathematical marks got him into forms beyond his real knowledge—his knowledge of Greek. He upset the natural order of things. He was a perpetual Ugly Duekling, that could not emit iambs. So his lot was far from enviable, and happily I remember only two such cases.

In the Sixth, it was Saturday mornings which were given to the innocent pursuit of mathematics, and to it we owed our happiest hours of peace. To go up School Gardens on a bright summer day, to cross the leisurely street of the beautiful country town, to buy breakfast (for an ancient tradition kept us strenuously underfed), to devour it slowly and at ease, knowing there was only mathematics before us that morning, followed by the long afternoon and Sunday—that was a secure and unequalled joy, and whenever mathematics are mentioned I feel still a throb of gratitude for those old pleasures. Our one lesson on Sunday was a difficulty to the masters. Of course there was the Greek Testament to fall back upon, but its Greek was so easy and so inferior to ours that it became a positive danger. We were sometimes given a Latin catechism, composed by some Protestant Father of the sixteenth century, denouncing Transubstantiation, but that also we had to read with caution lest it should influence our Latin prose. Once we waded through Dr. Westcott's "Gospel of the Resurrection," a supposed concession to those of us who were going to Oxford, and so were expected to philosophise a little. On Sunday evenings we learnt cantos of "In Memoriam" by heart, and explained them next morning by suggesting how they might be turned into Greek or Latin lyrics. Then the real labour of life began again with Greek, and so the weeks rolled on without a change.

Once, it is true, our greatest master, Arthur Herman Gilkes, afterwards head master of Dulwich, and the nearest approach to Socrates I have known, got an afternoon hour for the teaching of wisdom to the Sixth, and we really tried to listen, for he stood six feet four and had been captain



of football at Oxford.<sup>1</sup> But it was no good. Wisdom was far too easy and unimportant for us, and we let her voice cry in vain. Of such diversions as physical science or mechanics we never even heard, though their absence was perhaps sufficiently compensated for by the system of fagging, under which all the lower forms learnt the arts of lighting fires and plain cooking for the Upper Sixth. The new boys were also practised in public oratory, having in turn to proclaim the athletic announcements for the day, while they stood on the breakfast-table. The proclamation began with "O-Yes!" three times repeated, and ended with "God save the Queen, and down with the Radicals!" Anyone was at liberty to throw bread, sugar, or boots at the crier during his announcement; and many of my school-fellows have since displayed extraordinary eloquence on public platforms and in the pulpit.

In politics our instruction was entirely practical. For centuries the school had been divided into bitterly hostile camps—day-boys and boarders—doing the same work, sitting side by side in Form, but never speaking to each other, or walking together, or playing the same games. No feud of Whig and Tory or Capital and Labour was so implacable as ours. "Skytes" we called them, those hated day-boys, for whom the school was founded—mere Scythians, uncouth and brutish things that sacrificed the flesh of men and drank from a human skull. Out of school hours we did not suffer them within school gates. They were excluded even from the ball-court, except for fights. They were compelled to pay for separate football and cricket fields; and in football they adopted the vulgar rules of Association, while we aristocrats of tradition continued to cherish an almost incomprehensible game, in which, as in a Homeric battle, the leaders did the fighting, while the indistinguish-

<sup>1</sup> This truly noble man, my only real teacher, took orders during the Great War, because he was told men were wanted in the Church. He was then nearly seventy, and he died as Rector of St. Mary Magdalene's ("The Archipelago"), in Oxford, September, 1922, while I was away in Vienna, unable to tell him how deeply I valued his existence.

able host trampled to and fro in patient pursuit of a ball which they rarely touched, but sometimes saw. The breach may have begun when Elizabeth was Queen, or in the days of Cavaliers and Roundheads, and there is no knowing how long it would have lasted but for the wisdom of that wise master already mentioned. Whilst I was still there, myself a red-hot boarder, he began delicately to reason, amid the choking indignation of both sides, whose rancour increased as reason shook it. No reformer ever set himself to a task so hopeless, and yet it was accomplished. Within a year we were playing football under Association rules together, and before the old school was removed the wrath of ages had been appeased.

For the rest, I cannot say that the ingenuous art of Greek, though we learnt it faithfully, softened our manners much, or forbade us to be savages. One peculiar custom may stand for many as an instance of the primitive barbarity which stamps upon any abnormal member of a herd. Since the last Pancratium was fought at Olympia, no such dire contest has been seen among men as our old steeplechase. Clad in little but gloves—a little which grew less with every hundred yards—the small band of youths tore their way through bare and towering hedges, wallowed amid bogs, plunged into streams and ponds, racing over a two miles of country that no horse would have looked at. The start was at the Flash side of the Severn, and if I had cleared the first stream and the hedge beyond it with one clean bound, as my young brother did, I would have it engraved on my tombstone: “He jumped the Flash ditch. R.I.P.” The winner of the race was, of course, the boy who came in first; but the hero of the school was he from whom the most blood was trickling at the finish, and who showed the bravest gashes on his face as he walked down the choir of St. Mary’s at next morning’s service. The course for the display of all this heroism was marked by the new boys, whose places as “sticks” were allotted by the huntsman the day before, the whole school accompanying him, and by immemorial

custom the most unpopular new boy of the year was always set at the last post—a slippery stump of ancient tree projecting in the very midst of a particularly filthy pond. As we drew nearer and nearer the place, all of us advancing at a gentle trot, one could see the poor creature growing more and more certain that he was the boy. We all exchanged smiles, and sometimes his name was called out : for all, except himself, had agreed who it would probably be. At last the pond was reached, and we stood round it in a thick and silent circle, awaiting the public execution of a soul. The boy's name was called. He came sullenly forward, and made a wild leap for the stump. Invariably he fell short, or slipped and plunged headlong into the stagnant water, whilst we all yelled with satisfaction. Wallowing through the black slush and duckweed, he clambered on to the tree at last, and stood there in the public gaze, declared the most hateful boy in all the school. Upon himself the ceremony had not always the elevating effect at which we aimed. For I remember one disappointed moralist in the Fourth Form remarking, "Frog's Pond doesn't seem to have done that fellow any good. He wants kicking again."

It is all gone now—Frog's Pond, the steeplechase, and the runners. The old school itself has been converted into a museum, and in the long, raftered room where we learnt Greek a crocodile with gaping jaws, stuffed monkeys, and some bottled snakes teach useful knowledge to all who come. When last I was there they were teaching a blue-nosed boy to make squeaks on the glass with his wetted finger, and he was getting on very well. But from my old seat (under the crocodile) I could see beyond the Berwick woods the wild and tossing hills already touched with snow, just as when I used to watch the running light upon them, and envy the lives folded in their valleys. Close in front was the bend of the river where Bryan's Ford swings past Blue Rails, just as it ran one night, still longer ago, when Admiral Benbow as a little boy launched his coracle for the sea. In a shining horseshoe the river sweeps round the spires on

Shrewsbury Hill. The red Castle guards the narrows, and east and west the Welsh and English bridges cross the water. Below the English bridge I never cared to discover what might come, for the river ran down towards the land of plenty and dullness, opposite to the course of adventure and the sun. But to follow up the stream, to scrape across her shingly fords, to watch for the polished surface of her shoals, and move silently over the black depths where no line had reached a bottom—let me die, as Wordsworth says, if the very thought of it does not always fill me with joy!

Incalculable from hour to hour, the river never loses her charm and variety. In a single night the water will rise twenty feet, and pour foaming through the deep channel it has been cutting for so many years. Along its banks of sandstone and loam the dotterels run, and rats and stoats thread the labyrinth of the flood-washed roots. There the bullfinches build, kingfishers dig their “tunnelled house,” moorhens set their shallow bowl of reeds, and sometimes a tern flits by like a large white swallow. On tongues of gravel, where the current eddies under the deep opposite bank, red cattle with white faces used to come down in summer and stand far out in the stream, ruminating and flicking their tails, or following us with wondering eyes as we ran naked over the grass and fell splashing into the water. Severn water is full of light and motion. Never stopping to sulk, it has no dead and solid surface, but is alive right through, reflecting the sunshine, green with long ribbons of weed, orange from the pebbly bed, and indigo where the unbreaking crests of its ripples rise. As it passes through deep meadows and under the solemn elms it whispers still of the mountains from which it came. Into the midst of hedgerow villages and ordered fields it brings its laughing savagery, telling of another life than theirs, of rocks and sounding falls and moorland watersheds. Other rivers may be called majestic, and we talk of Father Tiber or Father Thames, but no one ever called the Severn father, or praised her but for her grace. For she is like the body and soul of

a princess straight from a western fairyland—so wild and pliant, so full of laughter and of mystery, so uncertain in her gay and sorrowing moods. On my word, though the science of education must be a very estimable thing, untaught, untrained, uninstructed as we Shrewsbury boys would now be considered, I would not change places with the most scientifically educated man in England who had never known a river such as that.



## CHAPTER V

### CHRIST CHURCH MEADOWS

*"Iron sharpeneth iron."*—Proverbs xxvii. 17.

TWO years of unusual misery and failure, followed by two years of radiant joy and success—that is the record of my Oxford life. The misery and failure were partly due to the place, but chiefly to my own nature. As I was neither rich nor titled, but only a "Junior Student" or Scholar, receiving money left to the college for the encouragement of true religion and useful learning, I was naturally put in the Meadow Buildings, overlooking a dank and unwholesome swamp. The hope, as we satirically asserted, may have been that we scholars might die there of some feverish chill and save the thrifty Bursar the expense of our scholarships. But probably the real purpose was only to pour contempt on the little pride we may have retained after our interview with the Dean, who fell prostrate before aristocrat and plutocrat alike, but regarded a Scholar as a necessary evil. It happened that rain fell almost incessantly during my first term, and the meadows lay in flood like a stagnant lake, showing in the midst an isolated wooden gate, the very emblem of futility. The elms in the Broad Walk were shedding their yellow leaves. Beyond the meadows slid the fat and sluggish Thames, so different from my Severn. Beyond the river rose a line of low uplands, unfit to be called hills. When once I was taken up Shotover to look at the Chilterns, which I was told were like real hills, my heart sank at the sight of them, and I never walked in that direction again, ignorant what happiness those chalky slopes and valleys were to

bring me in the course of many years. For many terms I remained ignorant too of Boar's Hill, Cumnor, all the Scholar Gipsy's country, never visiting it or any of the Oxford neighbourhood, except sometimes at night, when I could compose my own imaginative and romantic scenes.

Within the walls of the House, I was isolated from my natural friends in time and position. One of the Scholars in my own year was an effeminate-looking person, apparently too petulant or fastidious for this world ; the other an uncouth creature, apparently what the Germans call "*blödsinnig*," and I think I never spoke to either of them. The "Westminsters" of that and the previous years were a peculiarly fine and attractive group, forming the centre of the most intellectual and agreeable set in the college. But I was far too shy and self-distrustful even to think of entering their charming circle. Compared with those London boys, I was hardly better than a barbarian. I knew little about music, though I played the flute and fiddle, badly ; little about literature outside the "Golden Treasury" ; and nothing about art, unless my keen delight in drawing exact representations of cows and dogs and mountains had something to do with art. In manners, an excessive sensitiveness, and the shyness which has been my plague throughout life made me so *farouche* that I was always offending the very people I most wished to please. I soon tried to become reconciled to loneliness. I read hard, though without enthusiasm. Starting directly after my bread-and-butter lunch, so as to avoid meeting anyone, I sculled a whiff down to Sandford lasher, wet or fine, played a solitary game of quoits, and returned almost before the eights were out. When the Torpids came, I ran with our boats along the bank, shouting till I could not speak, in the hope of kindling in myself some affection for my college, or perhaps attracting someone's friendship. But in both objects I failed.

Hoping to save my soul, two Evangelicals took pity on me, and used to come on Sunday evenings for theological

discussion. Seated one on each side of me, they would argue the meaning of regeneration, the limits of election, and the possibility of relapsing into sin after grace had been found. Just for human society I was rather pleased to have them there ; and indeed I was flattered, for one was in the Eight, in spite of his piety. But I was already replete with their doctrines, and had begun spewing them out. I was annoyed at their whining. I could not share their self-examination and their indifference to the outside world. Already I was too much of a *Weltkind* to care what doctrinal conclusions they might reach, and they gradually abandoned me as sunk below salvation. The High Church Party, to their credit, held aloof, discovering, after one brief effort, that I was far too savage and uncultured for them. For the same natural reason my tutor never asked me to come on a Reading Party, as all his other pupils were asked. One summer a buoyant little fellow from another college invited me as a former school-mate to go walking with him in Switzerland, and for six weeks we walked with knapsacks and string hammocks, which we slung between pines at night. At the cost of £19 all told, I saw a great deal of the country, but my spirit was not yet fully awake, and the extreme hardship destroyed my pleasure. I was numbed and sickened by the bitter cold at night ; we walked too far ; and our food was so poor that on one of the few occasions when we had our dinner of bread and chocolate or raisins inside an inn I almost tore the veal cutlet from the plate of the heavy German who sat champing open-mouthed beside me, and I only wish I had done so. The next summer two pleasant, well-disposed men, senior to me in the college, took me with them in a pair, and we rowed from the bridge by Oxford station up the canals through the heart of England till we emerged on the Trent and made the strategic point of Newark. As we took a tent to sleep in and cooked our own food, I learnt a good deal of camp life that was serviceable afterwards. But the canals through the heart of England are not romantic streams.

One Christmas Vac. a frank and kindly, though benighted young Tasmanian urged me to go with him to Paris, and for a month we stayed together at the Hotel Corneille near the Odéon in the Latin Quarter. Paris was at the time much disturbed about Marshal MacMahon (*J'y suis, j'y reste*), and England was disturbed, as so often, about the bogey of Russia. My acquaintance insisted upon storming down the streets at night shouting the patriotic song, "We don't want to fight, but by Jingo if we do!" For, being a Colonial, he thought very highly of England. Happily the passers-by looked on him as only mad, or perhaps they murmured as a Frenchwoman murmured at the sight of a wild dancing, *Toujours la jeunesse!* We tramped up and down the city, seeing all the museums and ancient buildings, made our way out to Versailles, St. Cloud, St. Denis, Vincennes, and the rest, observing especially the remains of the German siege and the Commune. But my ignorance of French history and language stood like a wall between me and interest, and the only points I recall with real pleasure were, first, long conversations with old John O'Leary, the exiled Fenian, who sat every evening in a café upon the Boulevard St. Michel and instructed me for the first time in the meaning of Ireland to an Irishman, and the cause of the deep hatred of my country that glowed in his fine and mournful eyes, while he treated me with a courtesy far more than paternal. And, secondly, my first visit to the Comédie Française to see an early night of a revived play called "Hernani," by Victor Hugo, whose name even I had heard. I did not think much of the play. It seemed tedious with rhetoric and boundless soliloquies. But the woman who played Donna Sol! From her first word (I think it is *Je descends*) down to her "coy, reluctant, amorous delay," when her lover urges her to the marriage bed! Then, the horn! the distant horn! "The horn of the old gentleman!" as George Meredith calls it. The lamentation over the dead! I had known nothing to compare with that woman, nor could ever know. Night after night I went, and day after



day I walked up and down the railings of the Parc Monceau where she then lived, carrying a big bunch of violets which I had not the courage either to leave at the door or to throw into the kitchen window. How the exquisite Sarah, in the glory of her youth, would have laughed if she had beheld her awkward, red-faced, speechless English adorer !

In Christ Church my incorrigible shyness was alone sufficient to prevent any friendly association with the Dons. If I saw one coming across Tom, I would turn back or go round by the other side. It never occurred to me that they could possibly take any interest in me, and no doubt I was right. But with the best of will, I did everything to ensure the dislike of all, from the Dean downwards. When I was up for my scholarship I asked the Dean the way to the Hall where the exam. was to be held—much the same as if I had asked the old Queen the way to Windsor Castle. When he invited me to breakfast (as once in four years he did invite even a scholar who had neither birth nor money) I refused to go—much the same as if I had disobeyed the old Queen's command to eat at her table. After two years or so, in mere spiritual pride, I refused to attend morning chapel in that beautiful cathedral so full of history, and demanded to be put on roll-call, a substitute for godliness unheard of in the House, or anywhere else except in impious Balliol. The Censors were inflamed with rage ; my tutor was torn with grief ; but the fatal breach in divine decorum was made, and what was worse, one or two serious men of much higher standing followed me through it.

Another offence was in its nature recurrent. A good many of us at that time cherished the hope of confirming our shaken religious faith by the Hegelianism of Thomas Hill Green, who lectured at Balliol, as Professor of Moral Philosophy. The lectures were at nine in the morning, and I attended persistently, though I never understood one single thought uttered by the simple, dark-browed, melancholic figure, who writhed and wrestled as he spoke, as though his thoughts were just beyond even his own power to grasp.



Fifty or sixty of us sat there, and I suppose the clever among them understood. I suppose Dr. Jowett understood, for he was generally there, sitting with his back against the table round which the rest of us sat, his legs stretched out over the floor, his vast head sunk on his chest, and his child like face fixed upon his feet in reverie. I suppose he understood, for as he went out he was once heard to murmur to himself, "Foolish man! Foolish man!" But to enjoy these intellectual or religious advantages I had on Saints' Days to break out through Tom Gate, defying the porter, who endeavoured to stop me, because on Saints' Days we of the House were supposed to go to chapel or go to sleep, but to do nothing else, in honour of the Saint. Whenever a Saints' Day came the Dean accordingly "gated" me for a week, so that I could not leave the College in the evening because I had left it too soon in the morning, and I was forced to interrupt my darkling rambles in Bagley Wood.

So it went on, offence succeeding offence till the final offence when, after I had been in for Greats and was on the point of going down, I took my mother and sister for a row on the river, forgetting a ludicrous performance called "Collections," no one knew why. It was an inspection in Hall at the end of every term before the Dean and all the Dons—an entirely useless ceremony, instituted in the age when the Dons felt they really must do something for their money. Next day the Dean summoned me to Hall, and I stood before him with my defence. Desisting from the pretty little sketches he was scribbling on the college paper (for he was by nature more of an artist than a scholar), he drew himself up to his full height, and looking more than ever like the brass eagle of the Cathedral lectern, he thundered: "Give him an imposition that will keep him in for four hours!" Such a penalty had never been heard of before. It was an outburst of petty hatred that startled even the equanimity of the Dons. I was on the point of stripping off my scholar's gown and flinging it on the stone

floor, when, unfortunately, the thought of my father's loss in money restrained me. If only I had done it! The memory of such defiance would be well worth the loss of £80 or £100 to me now.

So from the Dons' point of view my record was poor, and when I went down I received a very chilly testimonial from my tutor, and none from anyone else. Like many of my misfortunes, this was an unspeakable blessing, for with good testimonials I might have been a schoolmaster, or a Government official, or even a bishop—positions for which I was quite unsuited. But I do regret that I was then too young and too bashful to become acquainted with the distinguished men whom I could have seen every day in my own great college. Pusey and his unhappily deformed son, Liddon and Edward King (afterwards the beloved Bishop of Lincoln) lived within its walls, like cromlechs telling of battles that were then not so very long ago; and though they certainly would not have befriended me, they were distinguished men, good to have known. My own tutor, Mr. Madan, whose lectures were a farce, and who had stood hesitating for years whether his belief was sufficient to justify him in taking Holy Orders, must have held more stuff in him than appeared; for when he joined the Christ Church Mission in Uganda, which I called the "Crocodile's Comfort," he compiled a Swaheli Grammar that I found many years afterwards used by travellers in the very centre of Africa, and it is quite possible that he converted some African natives to his degree of religious indecision. But he was a shy and self-distrustful man like me, and when he took me for our one dreary walk each term (he was always known as a "conscientious" man), it was an agonising experience for us both, and we hardly spoke for wondering what to say next.

Then there was Dodgson, with his clean, clear-cut, white face, tall hat and meticulous clerical uniform, the very model of a precise and starchy Don, but already long known to the whole world as the "Lewis Carroll" who wrote the two

best children's books ever written. I think he taught only Euclid and a simple algebra to Pass-men, but he may have taught higher mathematics too, if anyone cared to learn them. On the philosophic side there was "Dickie" Shute, who, dressed in riding breeches, knew a lot about dogs and Aristotle, and was probably the most penetrating mind in Oxford: a born sceptic, a pitiless teacher, a cruel satirist to his pupils; and he had, besides, written an excellent book identifying Truth with the expression of Reality, and driving Oxford metaphysicians and Churchmen to distraction. There was Stewart, who also knew all about Aristotle, and for his Scottish solemnity was known as "The Megalopsuch," but who hid beneath his solemnity a solemn Scottish humour that sometimes came upon me so suddenly during his lectures that I could not restrain my laughter, though he never laughed. Perhaps this rather pleased him, for he betted I would obtain all manner of honours, and paid up his debts when I did not obtain them, so that I still owe him at least half a crown. And there was Reginald Macan, an Irishman, who had actually been in Germany, could read German, sang Schubert and Handelian songs with superb voice and grotesque grimaces, and lectured to portentous length upon Herodotus, with similar grimaces but with great interest, though to no purpose for the Schools. Of entirely different disposition from Shute, he too had a sceptical mind, which he turned successively upon the Resurrection and Thermopylæ, in the light of historical research; and, in consequence, on Pusey's insistence, was banished from the House, afterwards to become Master of Univ.,<sup>1</sup> where I suppose he finished his commentary upon Herodotus. A most interesting and prolonged commentary it must be, if it corresponds to his lectures. Nor ought one to forget, though I was on the point of forgetting, the wayward and aloof but most attractive figure of York Powell, who seemed to belong to London rather than Christ Church, though he had rooms in "Peck," and was to be seen sometimes flitting

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Macan resigned the Mastership of Univ. in April, 1923.

about with outspread gown, never mixing with Dons or Undergrads., and apparently speaking to no one. Yet, behind the glasses of those brooding but excitable eyes, and under the cover of that copious brown beard, what wit was concealed, what humanity and culture and knowledge of uncommon and beautiful truth whether in letters, art, or history ! I think no Oxford man in the least suspected it at the time ; certainly I did not till I was middle-aged and he was near to death.

But midway, as it were, between the venerated memorials of ancient wars and the marching pioneers of scepticism and culture stood the most characteristic group of Oxford, or at least of Christ Church, in those merry days. For want of a distinctive name, they were called the Broad-High-Church Party. They strove hard to unite Catholicism with culture, not a difficult task, and also to unite authority with criticism, which perhaps is harder. Charles Gore, afterwards Bishop of Oxford, was among them, but outside the House. Among us, one of the choicest enthusiasts was Francis Paget, afterwards Dean of Christ Church and Bishop of Oxford. He was then the very model of the urbane and cultured ecclesiastic, young, refinedly humorous, capable of elegant epigram, a faultless verbal scholar (he had been at Shrewsbury before my time), exquisite in dress and bearing, polite to embarrassing excess, and almost feminine in playful charm. But for my barbarism, it would not have been difficult for me to have won acquaintanceship, or even friendship, with the distinguished scion of my own school. But on that very account I all the more carefully avoided him, and when seated in his supersensual rooms for Latin compositions I assumed an even greater appearance of boorishness than was actually mine.

But the standard and motive and model of Francis Paget, as of all this younger school of Churchmen, whether lay or cleric, was Henry Scott Holland, I suppose the most inspiring personality I have ever known, except my own old master, Arthur Gilkes. In the side chapel of Handel's old church



at Little Stanmore is the tomb of some Countess of Pembroke, whose inscription describes her as the "chaste partner of her husband's bed and heart, religious without enthusiasm." The qualification to her religion dates the tomb, for it is obviously a blow at those wild and intemperate Wesleyans who preached a passionate and heartfelt religion, without the restraint and decency which graced the slumbers of the Established Church. I suppose that Holland's service lay in arousing the Church to an enthusiasm such as the Countess of Pembroke disdained upon her tomb. It was not an enthusiasm inspired by fear, as I suppose the Wesleyans' largely was. It was a joyful exhilaration of spirit, such as a young man or woman of perfect health and sanity may feel in starting out upon an adventure on a fine summer morning. By the senseless Oxford habit that invented "Rugger" and "Soccer," and converted the Cherwell into the "Cher," we called him "The Scotter." Partly it was affectionate intimacy, but somehow it gave the impression of speed, I suppose from association with the Scotch express. Speed, impetuosity, a mighty rushing wind—those are the ideas that his name still calls up to my mind. Body and soul seemed always to be going at full gallop, as though the Holy Grail were just in sight, and he might hope to catch it, if only he could run fast enough. Hedge, ditch, and rail—nothing could stop him. Shouting he swept over them all, just as with a shout he used to leap the brooks and gates when he took jumping parties out through the Oxford meadows along the upper river—parties that I was too shy to join, though I excelled in running with the Christ Church beagles round by Garsington and the Dorchester Clumps, and thoroughly enjoyed that barbarous sport. For I think no one divined so accurately what course a wretched hare would take.

In the story called "A Don's Day" ("Between the Acts") I once described Holland's way of going up Christ Church Hall: "Springing over the ground like the feet that bring good tidings; and all the young High Church Party,



in imitation of him, seemed to leap for joy as they walked." It was a true description—true in the speed and joy ; and true in the man's infectious influence. Joy in bringing good tidings was his life. I have never met a more joyful person. He was born happy, just as he was born Christian, and he could not help it. Birth gave him a vitality invincible. As my schoolfellow, Stephen Paget, says in his *Memoir of Holland*, "He had an everlasting delight in his own existence." When he was still quite young he wrote of himself : "I suppose I have got some gush of naked humanity that will always be with me." The very look of him recovered one's spirits. He looked like a humorous monkey, but a monkey that had unexpectedly acquired a soul. There was something almost painfully childish and naive in his pleasure over innocent creatures and things, as when, in crossing a Welsh brook one Sunday morning, he stopped with clasped hands and cried, "Oh, I say, just hark at the dear little water saying its prayers !" To me that sort of silliness was intensely irritating, though Holland's humour could just carry it off. But in the mouths of his many imitators it drove me to distraction, and if the Franciscans imitated their saint like that I do not wonder the Dominicans detested them. Walking one day across an Oxford field with me, one of Holland's disciples exclaimed, "Oh, look at that calf ! Dear little calf ! God's calf !" As though he had been a priest of Apis and had suddenly discovered the sacred mark upon the creature's tongue ! Although in his lectures I understood a sentence here and there, I never regarded Holland as a real philosopher ; not in the sense that Thomas Green was a philosopher. But when he spoke upon Plato or St. John I was quite incapable of absorbing even such philosophy and theology as he perhaps possessed, and so I was able to take all the greater interest in watching the energy with which he dashed to and fro across the lecture room, lashing his gown about as a leopard lashes his tail, turning his back upon us while he prodded the blank wall with his pencil or drew little pigs with curly tails upon it,

and then swinging round to face us with that irresistible smile, eyes radiant in exultation, and lips from which poured the incomprehensible verities of the Logos and the Platonic Idea.

Spiritually, those were terrible times for most men of my age. We were as deeply concerned and as profoundly divided over religious beliefs and religious doubts as the young are now over the different kinds of Socialism and the discoveries of Psychology, but the questions at issue were, for the individual soul, of still more poignant importance. Pragmatism was in those days unheard of in Oxford, but I now think there may have been a good deal of unconscious Pragmatism about Holland, for I remember his saying once in conversation that the truth of Christianity was partly proved by the spiritual satisfaction it gave to a deep longing in the human heart. And in a letter to his younger brother about that time (quoted in Stephen Paget's Memoir) the following paragraph occurs ; it is in reference to the book upon "Truth" by that "Dickie" Shute whom I mentioned before as the House Don distinguished for knowledge of Aristotle and dogs :

"But this is enough jaw—I only wanted to say that every formula of Shute's philosophy paralyzes my life, every formula of Plato's quickens it, though often I know not why, though often it seems illogical—and it is this which seems the final test of all philosophies. Do they, or do they not, answer to our life ?"

In those days we knew very little about that side of life which was so soon to absorb the world—the Social Question, the problems of poverty, the meaning and practice of social revolution. But in Holland's mind those questions were already thundering with persistence. Some years before I knew him he had called upon the resident tutors of Oxford to "wake up to a sense of life and death and the old primal sympathies." As early as 1873 he had written to Dr. Talbot, afterwards Bishop of Winchester : "I cannot but see 'self-

complacency ' as the real clerical vice ; the self-complacency of knowing that you at least have explained life quite easily, and can only pity those who find the answer to the riddle so hard to find." Strange thoughts in the Oxford where one of our number, as Stephen Paget records, was capable of saying, "The difference between the working man and us is that we can explain him, but he cannot explain us!" After all, Holland's particular service to his time was that he dragged his reluctant University, and even his decent Church, by the scruff of the neck out into the open from their fugitive and cloistered lairs, and convinced his followers that only by action in the storm and stress of the world can doubts be dispersed and the personal soul "find salvation."

"A self-centred life is a hopeless curse," he wrote many years later. "It is doomed to sterile pain. One must break out of it by violence if circumstances tend to create it. Anything to get out of the ring-fence of self-preoccupation." That was the underlying purport of many among his sermons when he became Canon of St. Paul's—those rushing sermons, like electric tempests or swinging swords. Out they poured, adjective scrambling on top of adjective, sentence leaping and bounding after sentence, loosely coupled with emphatic "ands," like camels striding across a desert tied head to tail. Formless they sometimes seemed, enthusiastic rather than reasoned. But if you took notes of their rapid course, as I did for some years, you came to perceive a definite line and purpose, and even an untheological listener like myself could make both head and tail out of them. 'Compared with Holland, even Liddon's silver trumpet of rhetoric appeared cold and old-fashioned, concerned with matters that concerned our world no more. But Holland's words were the living Word.

Once when I met him in my tutor's rooms he laughed generously at an ironic joke upon which I ventured, and his laughter filled me for the evening with proud exhilaration. But the opportunity fled by, and my painful self-distrust

hid me from the man. For nearly three years I stood aloof in lonely unhappiness, severed by my own shy nature from those who were necessary to my soul. Coming back from my solitary walks in darkness to Tom Gate, I often wondered why it was that I had to go to my solitary rooms without having spoken to a human being all day ; for even my scout hated me because I ate so little, and left so little for him. At Christ Church in those ancient days there was a set of "Junior Students" (Scholars) who by universal consent, except their own, were called "Smugs." They were also called "Comforters," because they habitually wound thick woollen scarves round their necks. Most of them, but not all, were mathematical or science men, and the line between "us" and them was so rigid that they all sat at one end of the table in Hall, while "we" sat at the other. What drew the line I cannot be sure, but it was drawn instantaneously and everlastingly, as fixed as the upper line between "us" and the Bullingdon or Loder Clubs, which only one scholar in my time ever crossed. What prevented me from associating with the "Smugs" I cannot say either ; perhaps if I had worn a "Comforter" they would have accepted me. But the idea never occurred to me at the time, and I remained isolated, usually in the middle of the table, but dashing through dinner and hurrying away almost before either set had finished taking their places. So I lived like the pelican in a wilderness, except that a pelican feeds her young with her heart's blood, and I fed only myself.

Suddenly—suddenly—one of the greatest changes in my existence came. In despair of happiness I was turning to the study of subjects that might be useful for the Indian Staff Corps or the Ceylon Civil Service, in which I knew a former schoolfellow ; but I was still nominally reading for "Greats," partly with the peculiar hope of finding God in metaphysics. Then it suddenly occurred to a Westminster scholar of my own year—a leader in the very set to which I should naturally have belonged but for my *gauche* timidity



—that he would ask me to read with him. I don't know what inner motive may have guided him to so queer a choice, but he told me afterwards that he had regarded me as an interesting eccentric in whose rooms he could perhaps read without interruption, whereas in his own he was interrupted by music, in which he particularly excelled, by a genuine passion for all art, especially Italian art, and by delight in the urbane and intellectual circle to which he belonged. What he gained from me I cannot conjecture, for he was immeasurably my superior in knowledge of beauty and the world, as well as in charm of character, since I had next to no knowledge of culture or the world, and no charm of character at all. It must have been little that he found, and I cannot say what it was. But to me his coming was like an opening spring after wintry gloom, and we were together in spirit, and usually in bodily presence, for about two years. It would be vain to express my friendship for him but in the well-known words of Montaigne when writing of Steven de la Boëtie: "If a man urge me to tell wherefore I loved him, I feel it cannot be expressed but by answering, Because it was he, because it was my selfe." And much of the succeeding passage, not quite so familiar, would serve my own case as well:

"He writ an excellent Latyne Satyre, since published, by which he excuseth and expoundeth the precipitation of our acquaintance, so suddenly come to her perfection; Sithence it must continue so short a time, and begun so late (for we were both grown men, and he some yeares older than my selfe) there was no time to be lost. . . . This (friendship) hath no other Idea than of it selfe, and can have no reference, but to it selfe. It is not one especiall consideration, nor two, nor three, nor foure, nor a thousand: It is I wot not what kind of *quintessence*, of all this commixture, which having seized all my will, induced the same to plunge it selfe and lose it selfe in his; which likewise having seized all his will, brought it to lose and plunge it



selfe in mine, with a mutuall greediness, and with a semblable concurrence.”<sup>1</sup>

My friend’s will never lost itself or plunged in mine ; for it does not take two to make friendship any more than it takes two to make love ; and, as I think Socrates said, in the case of love one can always distinguish the lover from the beloved. He often, half in jest, compared himself to a vampire, sucking the life from one victim and passing on to another, all for his own pleasure and spiritual food. I should rather attribute to him a sentence from Walter Pater (at that time well known in Oxford, and read by us together with great delight, though I believe now ignored by the young) : “ With a kind of passionate coldness, such natures rejoice to be away from and past their former selves.” That may sound a little chilly and self-seeking, but, after all, Wordsworth described his own Happy Warrior as one—

*“ Who, not content that former worth stand fast  
Looks forward, persevering to the last,  
From well to better, daily self-surpast.”*

But to me that friendship was not a self-surpassing movement from well to better. It was a transfiguration from the commonplace. The whole of my being was changed and illuminated with something of celestial light. It was not merely the amount I learnt from him of the intellectual and beautiful world, though that was inestimable. For though, I believe, born in Staffordshire within sight of the Derbyshire hills, he was a Londoner bred, and both at Shrewsbury and in Oxford I found in the Londoners an urbanity of knowledge and of manners far above the standard of us boorish provincials. From childhood he had been brought up in the midst of a society where conversation upon the great movements of the time, whether in religion, art, or politics, was the common event of every day. Ideas and people which I hardly conceived of were quite real and

<sup>1</sup> Montaigne, Book I, chap. xxvii : “ Of Friendship ” (Florio’s Translation).

actual to him. His knowledge of music and of English literature was very unusual, and his appreciation or criticism still seems to me unerring after forty years of listening to many famous critics. It was the same with art, at all events with Italian art, of which I was then entirely ignorant. With a laughing or scornful criticism he purged my mind of many crudities, many false idols, many harsh and intolerant aspects of life. It was characteristic of him and of our friendship that the subject of "sex" was never once mentioned between us.

I suppose it was self-confidence that he gave me, or self-appreciation—a sense of my own possible value which I never had before. If this extraordinary man, so highly esteemed by everyone who knew him, liked to be with me better than with others, I unconsciously concluded that there must be something valuable in myself. The whole world expanded and sang, as under the sun in May; and, as in the Days of Creation, every morning and every evening counted a fresh wonder. I still lay under that curse of timidity and hesitation which has plagued me all my life, but now for the first time I dared to look the world in the face, and to encounter strangers or acquaintances, and even Dons, with an incredible confidence that they were not necessarily my natural enemies, and would not invariably avoid me if they possibly could, as I had always avoided them. Instead of sculling alone down to Sandford lasher, I took to the regular coaching on the river, rowed in the Torpids, might have rowed in the Eight or even in the 'Varsity, if I could have added two stone to my stature. When the river was slack I played racquets, most delightfully rapid of games! It so happened that for two successive winters intense frost prevailed, and the Christ Church Meadows were coated with pellucid ice, under which one could see the grass and fishes. The river itself was frozen so hard that we skated down to Abingdon, only getting off at the locks, and leaping a gap of about ten feet under the Thame railway bridge at peril of our lives. So I learnt all

kinds of skating with fair success, of great advantage when I went as master for a term to my old Shrewsbury school. For as everyone else there skated worse, I had no difficulty in keeping order in form and getting the boys to learn the Classics for me. With every week and every day of those glorious months in Oxford while my friend and I were together, my spirits rose, my powers of mind and body were incalculably multiplied, and all recorded wonders of healing, conversion, and resurrection have since seemed to me no miracles.

Among my friend's many other services, second, but only second to this gift of courage and expansion of heart, was his revelation to me of beauty in language and the highest forms of art. In music, I had learnt the violin just enough to take an uncertain part in quartets and trios, especially Corelli's, with my elder brother, who was an admirable 'cellist, and with an old violin master, who loved music and played in enthusiastic but execrable style. I also knew some dozens of Schubert's and Schumann's songs, which nearly always went sounding to perfection in my head, though I could not utter a note with assured accuracy.<sup>1</sup> But now my friend began to reveal to me the glory of Bach and Beethoven—a glory which has only grown upon me as my years have grown. As to style in writing, we had many ironic and half-serious contests, for he insisted upon beauty of style, and I always felt an amused contempt for "stylists," such as I still feel. If a human being with the miracle of speech in his head has something to say, surely he can say it without fuss or hesitating selection! The only thing that matters is his own nature, which prompts both what he has to say and how he will say it. I see now that my friend was insisting upon the truth that the style is the man; I was insisting upon the greater truth that the man is the style. At heart, no doubt, we meant much the same, but

<sup>1</sup> Music, good or bad, has always run in my head, I think without a moment's intermission. Even during prolonged sleep it seems to continue, for the same music sounds there again directly I awake.

perhaps his insistence made me observe more carefully the methods of expression among the masters of writing, though I have never given a thought to the method of expression when I have been writing myself, beyond putting down what I wanted to say in the words that seemed to say it.

And then there was pictorial art. I had learnt a good deal about the English school of landscape from my father's small collection of pictures, and had myself taken the utmost delight in drawing. But of Italian art, as I said, I was entirely ignorant, partly because it was mainly Catholic ; or else it was pagan, which was harmless in comparison, unless naked. Now to the highest forms of art my eyes were opened, and for many years they counted among my chief delights. " Art " was much the fashion in the Oxford of those days—the days of the " æsthetic movement "—but just for that very reason I had been inclined to sneer at the talk about it as either effeminate or priggish. With the same insensate or sensible crudity I had neglected to attend the courses of lectures which Ruskin was then giving in the theatre of the Parks Museum. In the days when I went to chapel I used to watch that strange figure pass up the pavement of the choir, which is decorated with symbolic mosaics of Temperantia, Justitia, Fortitudo, and other virtues supposed to be distinctive of men and women, and desirable for youth. When on Sundays we all were dressed out in white surplices like angels, Ruskin used to sit in a stall behind the row of us scholars on the north side of the choir. I always sat on the south side myself, because it gave a better view of the Norman arches and St. Frideswide's chapel, and so I could contemplate him at leisure—the mass of tawny hair, carefully brushed into order ; the bright grey, nearly blue eyes, usually quiet and meditative under tawny and projecting eyebrows ; the eagle nose, the long and sensitive mouth, the rather receding chin ; the whole face thin, well-wrinkled, and then still clean-shaven ; the bright blue necktie wound two or three times round an upstanding



collar, not hanging down over the shirt-front, but fastened by some invisible pin ; the head inclined a little to the left, owing to the draughtsman's habit of raising the left shoulder ; the loose and unfashionable clothes, partly concealed by the long gown ; the whole bearing shy, and showing just a touch of a Don's self-conscious and apologetic manner, as much as to say, " Yes, I know I am distinguished, but please do not condemn me unheard."

At last, persuaded by my friend, I agreed to " do a Ruskin," and so I came at once and permanently under the enchantment of that magical personality. I can still see the shyly conspicuous figure entering from the left-hand door of the science theatre—softly, rather deprecatingly, under our applause. For we always applauded his appearance, and when a scholar next to me once grumbled, " Why applaud ? We never applaud other professors," I could only reply, " We have no need." After glancing at the row of drawings—usually Turner's or his own—arranged to illustrate the lecture, he would turn to face us with those blue and meditative eyes, and then begin to speak. Many have described that singular and penetrating voice, holding the audience spellbound far beyond the appointed hour. Upon me the humour, the irony and flashes of satire made the deepest impression, though beyond these lay the penetrating vision, the depth of thought and the passion of indignation which raised his lectures far above the religious height of the most solemn services I have heard. Recalling the effect, I once wrote in the " Daily Chronicle " :

" I well remember how in the last lecture of one course he so overwhelmed us all with solemn awe that when he closed his book no one moved or spoke. We sat there absolutely silent. We no more thought of the usual applause than we should have thought of clapping an angel's song that makes the heavens be mute. After a few seconds, Ruskin looked up as though surprised. Then, seeing what was the matter, he turned to the drawings, made a few casual remarks about



them, bringing us back to this present world, and disappeared. The applause broke like a storm.”

Oscar Wilde was among that audience, always leaning his large and flabby form against the door upon our right, conspicuous for something unusual in his dress, still more for his splendid head, his mass of black hair, his vivacious eyes, his poet's forehead, and a mouth like a shark's in formlessness and appetite. But, indeed, everyone in Oxford then, distinguished or soon to be more distinguished (and Wilde was both), attended those lectures, for Ruskin's influence was dominant in art and letters ; and his influence even upon the revolution in social economies was just beginning to be felt, as it has been felt with growing power ever since. For nearly twenty years had then passed since the kindling of the flame which compelled him to give to man what cultured circles claimed for themselves.

Boar's Hill, between Bagley Wood and Cumnor, now the home of genius and of learning, was hardly known then even by name, except perhaps as a haunt of the Scholar Gypsy. But now, whenever I go to visit John Masefield there, I stop at a wooden gate in a high fence that runs along its edge. For through that gate one may still see Oxford as she was, the fence on one side cutting off the red villas of the married Dons (*spes tanta nepotum*, as Æneas said of the bed-chambers in Priam's palace), and on the other cutting off the working-class quarter of red or yellow streets (equally promising in the way of progeny, I suppose) that now extend around the foot of Shotover Hill. There, within her proper limits, the city still lies, beautiful in grey and brown, like some ancient painter's vision of what a city should naturally be. Beautiful she must be to all who see her, but to many, as to me, she possesses a beauty far more deeply interfused, and visible to us alone. It is the beauty of a remembered youth, when the soul at last awoke and, bursting her rigid chrysalis, flew radiantly out into the sun and air.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE SEARCH IN GERMANY

“ To see  
The broad red sun, over field,  
Forest, and city, and spire,  
And mist-track'd stream of the wide  
Wide German land, going down  
In a bank of vapours.”

MATTHEW ARNOLD : “ Heine’s Grave.”

DURING our last term in Christ Church, my friend and I launched out upon various delightful pursuits, the chief of which was the study of German. Reginald Macan encouraged us, and advised beginning with Heine’s “ Briefe über Deutschland,” which we spelt out together with eager appreciation. No writer could have suited our mood better at that time, and throughout life we have both retained for Heine an affectionate admiration. He died, I believe, about nine months before I was born, and it amused me to imagine what a shock my parents would have suffered if his tenderly mocking spirit, released from the mattress grave, but precluded from entrance into the Jewish Heaven, the Christian Heaven, or the Elysian Fields, had wandered into my embryo shape for want of more comfortable lodging. In two slim volumes of excellent translation my friend long afterwards put his admiration to better purpose than such fantastic imaginings.

But it was not Heine who drew me to Germany : it was Carlyle. The influence of that dæmonic man of genius upon me and others was still incalculably powerful, though he was old and near to death. We did not accept his theories of government, we hardly realised or noticed them, and when Party Liberals denounced him we were astonished. To us

he was a wide-spreading and revolutionary force, working like leaven—"the Sauerteig" to which he compared himself—fermenting, permeating, purifying, lightening, leavening, the whole lump. And the lump was the British society of the time—sticky, stodgy, inert—the self-complacent society which stood enraptured before the beauties of commercial prosperity, competition, increase of population, and cheapness of labour. "Beautiful is it," he had cried as early as 1843, "to see the brutish Empire of Mammon cracking everywhere!" "The idle man is the only monster," he proclaimed; "two men I honour, and no third"—one being the labourer, the other the highest kind of teacher—and to the sound of those iron strings our hearts vibrated. Already we heard the hum of mighty workings, and dimly felt the change that was just at hand when the whole structure of society, idolised by the prophets of manufacturing Liberalism, was to be criticised, tested, and upheaved.

Yet it was not so much Carlyle's impulse to social revolution that made us his disciples. Rather it was his rebellion against the so-called "materialism" of the period—his insistence upon spiritual realities as truths still possible of belief, though the forms of time-honoured religion were fading fast. Carlyle had told us that it was among the Germans, especially in Goethe, that he discovered his spiritual consolation. And Carlyle was so beloved a master that I accepted all he said; so beloved that, hearing how Froude used to take him for a drive in his brougham every afternoon, I escaped one day from Westminster School, where I was vainly attempting to teach classics amid the crowding chaos of a vast schoolroom, and took my stand nearly opposite the familiar house in Cheyne Row. A few biggish trees grew on the further side of the street to "Number 5," and having hidden myself carefully behind the largest, I waited. The brougham was standing ready there, and presently the door opened. Supported by Froude, a small and slightly bent old figure came down the steps. A loose cloak, a large, broad-brimmed hat, a fringe of white

beard and white hair, a grave and worn face, deeply wrinkled and reddish brown, aged grey eyes turned for a moment to the racing clouds—that was all. What was to me incomparably the greatest spirit of the living world entered the carriage. The carriage turned and drove away over the old wooden Battersea Bridge through the dying radiance of a winter sunset.

So, under Carlyle's inspiration, having saved about fifty pounds by teaching, I went to look for God in Germany. It was an immanent, all-pervading God that I sought, and I knew in my heart that no matter where I might be I could say, "Here or nowhere is my God." But still I went to Germany in my search, and as I crossed the frontier into that Promised Land, I kept singing silently to myself, as my manner is, "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him! that I might even come into His presence!" To the modern mind my selection of the place for my exploration may appear strange, and sometimes I have regretted that I did not rather choose France and attempt to imbibe more of the French spirit, however divergent from our English mind. Saul went in search of his father's asses and found a kingdom; but to myself it has sometimes seemed that I went in search of my Father's kingdom and found His asses. Yet I do not regret the search, for it was passionately genuine, and if I did not gain what I sought, much still was gained.

I have often lived in Cologne since then—have lived there for many weeks after entering it with the British Army at the Armistice of 1918—but not for a second time could I feel the joy that filled me as I sat in a window overlooking the Rhine—the Rhine!—and stumbled about in the First Part of "Faust," till the sky beyond the river turned white with the summer dawn. And that next evening when, almost incapable of the language, I emerged at Weimar, and was taken by a demure German family for a walk in the park, while they kept murmuring to each other, "*Wunderschöne Nacht!*" and we passed the gates of the classic Schloss (where the guard sat always ready to spring



to attention and stand with arms presented whenever one of the Grand Ducal family chose to appear and the sentry shouted, *Heraus !*) and so wandered into the "Stern," overshadowed with trees, and out upon meadows, brilliant with flowers even in the dusk, while on the right the little stream of the Ilm slid along its course hardly whispering. And then suddenly, and as though by accident, someone said, "*Sehen Sie, Goethes Gartenhaus !*" and there the white cottage stood, wooden, simple, covered with tresselled roses, the roof high-pitched, a little white gate opening through the hedge. It would be impossible, I suppose, to make the modern mind realise what tides of emotion and reverence overwhelmed me at such a sight and at the thoughts of all the memories hidden there.

So began my long and intimate acquaintance with Goethe's ghost. I did not find in him what Carlyle had found, for Carlyle imported into his reading his own religious and moral fervour. I did not find God in any personal sense—in no more personal sense than I had found Him in the "Deus" of Spinoza. But I found a very remarkable and lovable man, and not all the dust and ashes that commentators and biographers have sprinkled thick over his memory have been able to obliterate my admiration and friendship. So strong and lasting did my personal relation to him become that when, early in 1919, I was one day exercising a cavalry officer's horse in the forests at Bensberg across the Rhine from Cologne, and suddenly came upon an old wooden inn bearing a record of Goethe's presence there in 1774, horse, war, German defeat, the British Army of Occupation, and all vanished from my mind, and I was sitting there beside the youthful Goethe, who had but just delivered himself of his own and Werther's sorrows, and was hearing the deep undertones of "Faust" already sounding in his soul. I could criticise Goethe as well as anyone else, for it is not difficult to show that in all those volumes of his writings there is very little of permanent artistic worth ; that many of his best conceptions never got



beyond the rank of fragments ; that even "Faust" is a jumble, and "Meister" a fumbling, uncertain production, fading away into symbolism and scenes that have no more connection with each other than a cartload of bricks ; that few writers have talked so much about art and produced so little ; that he allowed his genius to be hampered and almost overwhelmed by distractions and dilettante pursuits ; that he sold his birthright for a mess of aristocratic society ; that he wasted much time over such studies as his Theory of Colour, simply through want of adequate preparation for the sciences ; and that at times he shows himself as pompous and pedantic as any of his own countrymen. I could prove all that as well as any literary scavenger, and yet I can never resist the attraction of the man.

For when the worst has been said, this was, after all, the man of genius who created Mephisto, one of the beings who may be called immortal, as Falstaff and Don Quixote may be called immortal ; and who also created Werther and Mignon and Philina and Gretchen and Faust himself. This is the man whose songs Heine called the best in the world, and Heine was a judge of songs. And in scavenging the waste heaps of his vast production, what pearls of wisdom the patient seeker may even there discover—a wisdom of life gathered at first hand from a rich and various experience! But, in the end, it is the man himself who becomes the finest discovery. All his works, as he said, are "confessions"—are autobiography—and, I suppose, there is no one's life that can be followed more closely in letters and diaries almost from day to day. The interests aroused by acquaintance with so profuse a personality are very varied, but to myself, next to his creative work comes his energetic resolve to live this present life to the full, breaking through the narrow bonds of literary production and other forms of specialism, such as most intellectual people comply with, especially in Germany. He refused the second-hand life of writers who then abounded, and whose tombs are still marked by little headstones in the necrology of literature—

writers of whom he said himself : “ The day is long and so is the night ; one cannot always be writing poetry. And yet their names are worth preserving, if only as a warning that even a distinguished man lives but from day to day, and has a poor time of it if he turns in upon himself and refuses to thrust his hand deep into the fullness of life, where alone he can find the nurture and the measure of his growth.”<sup>1</sup>

Life at first hand—that was his virtue and his reward. At the end of his full period of existence he could say with pride, “ In all my works I have never shammed (*habe nie affectirt*).”<sup>2</sup> “ Like a snake,” he wrote even in his early manhood, “ I cast my slough and start afresh.”<sup>3</sup> For he refused to repeat himself, or to be bound even by the successes of his own past. He refused also to advertise his accomplishment. “ Talent is like virtue,” he said ; “ it must be practised only as a dangerous secret.”<sup>4</sup> From his energetic life in Weimar he acquired a breadth of sympathy with mankind often advertised by writers since the days of Rousseau, but seldom shown in Goethe’s practical way, as when he devised relief for the starving weavers of Apolda, or rode out night after night to save the huts of Thüringen peasants from fire.<sup>5</sup> Writing to his lover from among the miners of the Harz, he said :

“ What admiration I feel for that class of men which is called the lower, but which in God’s sight is certainly the highest. Among them we find all the virtues together—moderation, contentment, uprightness, good faith, joy over the smallest blessing, harmlessness, innocence, patience—but I must not lose myself in exclamations ! ”<sup>6</sup>

It was from this practical activity that he obtained a blessed condition which he sometimes called “ Peace ” and sometimes “ Purity ” (*Reinheit*). It is noticeable how often those words *Friede* and *Reinheit* occur in his letters and diary

<sup>1</sup> “ Aus meinem Leben,” Buch X.

<sup>2</sup> Conversations with Eckermann, March 14, 1830.

<sup>3</sup> To Auguste von Stolberg, May, 1776.

<sup>4</sup> “ Meisters Lehrjahre,” IV, 2.

<sup>5</sup> “ Tagebuch ” frequently.

<sup>6</sup> “ Letters to Frau von Stein,” December, 1777.

during his early manhood. "Peace and a foretaste of wisdom," he writes in the "Tagebuch," January, 1779; "a more definite sense of limitation, and thereby of true expansion." And again ("Tagebuch," February 1, 1778): "Refreshed and with energies knit up, let me now enjoy purity (*Reinheit*)."<sup>1</sup> It may seem strange that the man whose life was so full and whose energies so various should have thus insisted upon limitation. We find it repeated throughout his life: "The artist shows himself in limitation," he was never tired of saying; or, on a different plane:

"Und so lang du das nicht hast,  
Dieses: *Stirb und Werde!*  
Bist du nur ein trüber Gast  
Auf der dunklen Erde."

To cast the slough of the past, to recognise the folly of trying to repeat success (for "Twice is impossible," as Aristotle said), and yet to insist upon the necessity of limitation—those seem the watchwords of his life, and he had to reconcile their apparent contradictions. Perhaps they may be reconciled in a passion for knowledge or truth, such as we see in one of his own epigrams in answer to the people who kept urging him to abandon science and return to his verse-making and beautiful tales:

"Always at botany? always at optics? What does it boot you?  
Touching a tender heart, is not that higher reward?"  
"Ah, yes, the tender hearts! Any bungler is able to touch them:  
My one prayer is to touch, Nature, the hem of thy robe."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> What stress he laid upon activity and practical life as correcting the German's besetting sin of melancholy is seen in a passage of his "Conversations with Eckermann" (March 12, 1828):

"If only one could alter the Germans a little after the model of the English"—(he was speaking of the English aristocrats who were visiting Weimar—the "Crazy fools (*Verrückte Narren*)" as he called them)—"if only we could have less philosophy and more power of action, less theory and more practice, we might obtain a good share of redemption without waiting for another Christ. A third part of our learned men and statesmen, being shackled to the desk, are ruined in body and consigned to the demon of hypochondria—But let us be hopeful of a better condition for the German of a century hence. They may perhaps have then advanced so far as to be no longer professors and philosophers, but men."

<sup>2</sup> "Venetian Epigrams," 78.

So it was that I did not find in Germany exactly the fulfilment which I sought, but found a very remarkable and lovable being instead. "I am always so glad," he once wrote to Herder, "always so glad to hold my tongue when people begin talking about the Supreme Being." But in his life he was possessed by that "holy earnestness" which, as the chorus of youths sang over Mignon's body, alone makes life eternal. "*Nichts vom Vergänglichen!*" he cried: "*Wie's auch geschah, uns zu verewigen sind wir ja da.*" Such a nature, thus sternly exercised, may throughout life enjoy that "severe delight" of which Wordsworth spoke. And in the end, over him, too, as over the soul of Faust, immortal spirits may sing: "Delivered from the Evil is the noble offspring of the Spirit-world. Who strenuously onward strives, him we have power to redeem:"

" *Gerettet ist das edle Glied  
Der Geisterwelt vom Bösen :  
Wer immer strebend sich bemüht,  
Den können wir erlösen.*"<sup>1</sup>

I am not sure how far I owe to Goethe another great service—my deliverance from ghosts. I had at that time a strong inclination to ghosts—to fairies, haunting visions, and especially to the spirits of romantic old knights, ladies dead, and the other lovely persons described in the chronicles of wasted time. In my wanderings on foot far through England and the Lowlands I showed what a friend of those days called "an unfailing nose" for ruined castles, abbeys, ancient houses, cathedrals, and any other relic of the Middle Ages. The inclination has remained strong, and at the sight of any true record of the past—even an old rafter or a parish register—I still find it hard, in spite of reason, to believe that the vanished life which romance can imagine exists no more at all, but has been wiped out for ever like a child's drawing upon a slate. Goethe in his youth felt a similar attraction to the romance of departed times, and to

<sup>1</sup> Song of the Angels bearing upward the immortal part of Faust; "Faust: zweiter Theil," near the end.



me Germany was still the home, sweet home of ghosts. Even for those days I was old-fashioned as well as ignorant ; for Bismarck was supreme, and Germany had entered upon a different course. But when, on my first morning in Weimar I went with a French youth to see a great review of the local army contingent, I was certainly amazed at the exact precision of the drill, but my real interest lay in the distant views of the Thüringen Forest, and the low, dark hills stretching south into unknown and haunted regions. I hardly knew what I hoped to find in those dim woods of fir and dappled woods of beech. But, with intense enthusiasm I used to trudge up the Ettersberg (chiefly for Goethe's sake) and walk westward to Eisenach (for the sake of Bach) and to the Wartburg, and south to Berka and Ilmenau (again for Goethe's sake), and to Paulinzelle, with its ruined abbey, and the beautiful old towns of Saalfeld and Rudolstadt, and all down the valley of the rushing Saale, where I helped to navigate the timber rafts. Some of those exquisite journeys were made three or four years later when I was a student in Jena, but I began them from Weimar so soon as I could speak a little of the language. Spirits of the past often bore me company, but, unhappily, I never succeeded in meeting either ghost or kobold or witch or fairy or any such desirable being in visible presence. Nor have I met any of them since, not even in the Psychical Research Society, though Frank Podmore was my friend for many years.

But I did succeed in catching hold of joy as it sped past me like a dream, or like the dear Middle Ages themselves. To wake up in a little wooden room of a little wooden village ; to go out into the forest air of early morning alone and tramp mile after mile through trees and over low hills, singing (I must repeat that I was alone) all the long series of Schubert songs and *Volkslieder* that came into my head ; to live upon bowls of sour milk, with black bread and wild strawberries, and at night to discover another little wooden village that seemed never to have stirred since it was built out of Noah's Ark ; or to reach some little town, standing with walls and



towers unmoved since Wallenstein slipped past it—those were joys sufficient to compensate for all the ghosts and fairies that I never found, and gradually the yearning for unincarnate spirits of every kind ceased to haunt me, though it sometimes returns :

“ *Weg, du Traum ! so gold du bist ;  
Hier auch Lieb' und Leben ist : ”*

One morning at early dawn, looking out from my window opposite the old Schloss Tower in Weimar, I repeated with joy those well-known lines as I saw a common conscript and his girl kissing each other along the silent road as though they never could kiss enough. And I might have recalled the lines again one day at Wittenberg when, caring little for Luther, I swam across the heavy current of the Elbe, ran quickly up the further bank, and swam back again, was at once arrested, marched off to some podgy official, and fined five marks for risking my life, though I told him the payment of five marks was much more dangerous to me than swimming the river. And then at sunset, walking in the market-place, I met Hedwig, the loveliest type of German girlhood, and sat beside her all that evening and next morning while she crocheted black silk coverings for buttons, and her mother or sister ran out from time to time for the coffee and other delights that I was asked to provide ; all in voluptuous innocence and a passionate affection, lasting for a day.

Besides, there was joy in going to my German lesson with old Dr. Wintzer of Weimar, a lovable type of old-fashioned German, who, as a boy, had often seen Goethe walking in his garden and clipping the rose bushes. And then, in the afternoon, we few Englishmen who were in the town would meet for tennis on the “Stern” in the park, while the populace stood amazed at a skill which could actually strike a ball over a net. And in the evening, after the quiet family meal of sausage and tea, would come the theatre—Goethe’s old theatre—where I saw all Schiller’s dramas acted in turn, and yet survived ! For I was young and overflowing with savage health.

Sometimes, too, in the afternoon, usually on a Sunday, there would be a great musical performance in the old church, where stands Lucas Cranach's picture of the Crucifixion, with a horrible stream of blood issuing from the side of Christ. Something of Liszt's might be given, and the old master himself, notable in face and long white hair, would act as conductor. Perhaps "act," except in the dramatic sense, is hardly the right word, for he never really did more than wave his baton about in a dreamy manner, passing, in fact, far away into musical imaginings after the first few bars, while, hidden below him, the real conductor of the piece directed the orchestra unperceived. It was a deception recognised with kindly allowance, and after the performance the prettiest girls came forward to kiss his revered hand as he left the church, all smiles.

Once when Bülow played in the concert room, the coda and finale of the performance gave a very different sound. He had played as usual with half-closed eyes gazing over the audience, as much as to say, "Now, just listen to this! Isn't it something quite too exquisite?" But I suppose someone whispered or coughed; for when a sweet young girl, in all the purity of white muslin and blue ribbons, presented him with the customary laurel wreath, he stamped upon it with both feet, and the poor child ran down the hall weeping pure little tears and crying out: "*Er ist wüthend! Er ist wüthend!*" And indeed "raging" would hardly have translated his fury.

As a student in Jena, too, I attended morning lectures upon Kant and Goethe, besides Ernst Haeckel's lectures in morphology, which, as being outside my segment of knowledge, I visited only for the charm of the man and in admiration of his clear and humorous statement. For he was one of the few professors—perhaps the only German professor—who seemed to me worthy to be called a man; but he was a man of the finest type, active, broad-minded, and enthusiastic in the study of nature. As a writer of world-wide distinction, and Rector of the University, he received the

largest income of all the professors—the equivalent of £300 a year. Equivalent in actual coin, I mean, for in value it went much further. A student could get a quite sufficient midday dinner for 60 pfennigs (about 7 pence), and by teaching classics to a few English candidates for our Civil Services, and English conversation to a few Germans, I made enough for man and wife to live upon in decent luxury, to say nothing of a baby! Among my German pupils I am proud to remember Carl Zeiss, son of the great optician, then still alive but known chiefly for the excellent guinea microscopes which he made for the students.

But of far greater advantage to Germany than my teaching of our language was the instruction we few Englishmen gave the youth of Jena in the habits and customs of boats and balls. By our example upon the river-reach called “Paradies,” we proved to them how much steadier and quicker even one of their tubby old boats with fixed rowlock-pins would travel if their rowers kept some sort of time together. In the fields we showed them how much speedier a football with a blown-up bladder inside could move than their old leather case stuffed with protruding straw; and how much more exciting was a game under rules and between sides than the exercise of kicking the ball whenever one could get near enough, without sides or rules. We also induced a limited number of the more adventurous to come for “runs” through the neighbouring forests and villages, sometimes climbing the Fuchsthurm hill or up to the Forst tower upon the opposite height; sometimes “drawing” the idyllic hamlet of Ziegenhain (famed for its white beer), or running down the river bank towards Dornburg (with memories of Goethe again), or over Napoleon’s old battlefield to Vierzehnheiligen. Our light costumes aroused scandal, and our energy bewilderment, but it was fine, almost dead of thirst, to reach the tall Seidels of Lager in a students’ beer-house—so fine that when one of my best “hounds” purposely jerked my arm just as I began to drink, I poured the whole lot over his head with a rolling German curse,

and in subsequent "runs" he ran better than ever. I have been told that since those days the Jena football team has acquired a high reputation in its own country, and I devoutly hope that its members for all generations will appeal in my behalf at the Last Judgment.

But to the only German for whom I felt something like friendship all these jollities seemed child's play, unworthy of a denizen in this miserable world. He did not even approve the students' clubs and duelling, though I suggested that the richer students would suffocate in their own fat, or burst with beer, but for this blood-letting and the amount of exertion required for slitting the envied gashes upon each other's faces. He would gladly have beheld the outside world vanish altogether, and, indeed, he often behaved as though it had vanished already. As his father was an intimate friend of Schopenhauer, I suppose the son was born unhappy. He was certainly born with the religious or metaphysical mind peculiarly developed, and though he mocked at metaphysics as cobwebs of the brain, he could no more escape from their net than a fly from the web. He would spend whole days and nights in meditation upon the mental and spiritual world, and as he had, unhappily, inherited a small income, just enough to keep him in food and lodging, he had no external interests as rivals to religion and philosophy, except his own health and his own clothes, about both of which subjects he cherished unusual theories. He even put the theories into practice, to the perpetual annoyance of his landladies and acquaintances. For he insisted upon uncommon kinds of cooking, washing, and garments, under and outer—the under garment ordained by the Jaeger ritual (which he reverently followed) and the outer consisting mainly of a tunic like an officer's, with a collar embroidered in coloured flowers, but no shirt-collar above it or tie beneath.

Perhaps among his external interests I should also include cats and the Army, for he was strangely devoted to both. Once at Mainz we had seen a nice enough grey cat in a



restaurant window, but had continued our walk for some miles into the country, discussing immortality or some similar subject, when he suddenly exclaimed, "I yearn for that pussy-cat!" ("Ich sehne mich nach die Mieke-Katze!"), turned round, and walked back to the restaurant without another word spoken. Though he was physically too feeble to serve even as a "One-Year Volunteer," he was overfilled with enthusiasm for the German Army, and, what was more strange, for the British Army too. His knowledge of military history and detail was very remarkable, though I have met similar knowledge in at least two English students of war who had never heard a shot fired. When he came to stay with me in London, and I took him to a Royal review at Aldershot, it so happened that in front of one detachment a gorgeous figure went caracolliing, decked in a superb uniform of scarlet and silver, with a flying cloak like a Hungarian's for splendour. All of us made wild shots at foreign regiments, but my friend said quietly, "Yorkshire Yeomanry," and was right.

His love of the Army came partly from Prussian pride, for he was Prussian born, and regarded Saxons and Bavarians with disdain. But chiefly it came from a romantic or knightly spirit which had somehow lodged in his unmilitary form and contemplative mind. Frail, dyspeptic, hypochondriacal, inactive, he always at heart regarded himself as a knight errant with lance well poised and armour braced. He had taken his Doctor's degree with a thesis upon the "Chanson de Roland," and his knowledge of all mediæval poetry and life was extensive. But the ideal of German chivalry and the glory of old German civilisation possessed his mind. More ghosts haunted him than were ever driven out from myself, and once when we stood together upon "The Platte" above Wiesbaden, and looked over the bit of plain where he told me Charlemagne's host had been gathered for some vast and forgotten purpose, I feared he would faint with suppressed emotion. Still, even there he did not neglect to take out his watch surreptitiously to see if the appointed



half-hour for speaking German was up. For he arranged that we should always speak English and German in alternate half-hours, and he was careful never to have his English lesson docked.

A strange and lovable being he was—a mixture of the dreamer in action and the warrior in thought, but one of the few spiritually-minded men I have intimately known. “*Heinrich*,” he used to say with a sigh of lamentation and reproof, “*du hängst zu viel an diese Welt*,” and he was certainly right ; for this world so teems with marvels and splendours that I would not turn my head to see the greatest miracle of all the saints performed, or any other glory that could ever be revealed. But still I have sometimes envied his power of spiritual concentration, as when during his stay with us near London he used to sit in the suburban garden after breakfast, meditating upon God, and quite regardless of the amusement he afforded to the City men hurrying past the railings to catch the early train. Once when I met him in Germany, eight years after our first acquaintance, I found that he had been received into the Catholic Church, and I think that then he might have become a priest, except that, as he told me, he did not possess that most excellent gift of chastity which is the particular and essential privilege of the priesthood. He expounded the value of authority and obedience to me at some length, but whether the Church has been able to retain authority over so speculative and incalculable a nature I cannot say. Nor do I know whether he is still alive, for he has sent me no word since the beginning of the war, and his address was far from permanent. About my own spiritual future he was always very apprehensive—I hope a little over-solicitous. “*Heinrich ! Mir graut’s vor dir*,” he used to say, echoing Gretchen’s last words in the gaol. I suppose nearly all Englishmen would have called him crazy, and, judged by our ordinary standard, he may well have been. For though I feel a particular and instinctive horror of the insane, I have often found they felt a particular and instinctive attraction to me, discovering,

I suppose, in my dogged common-sense a comfortable antidote to the flighty illusions of their genius.

It was not due to this friend's influence that I subsequently entered upon a careful study of the German Army and its organisation. During my time in Jena I did not pay much attention to international or social questions. I was almost entirely occupied in literature, philosophy, teaching for livelihood, and athletics, varied by the joy of breaking away into solitude and striding up to the Luftschiff or through some other forest region. But it was impossible to ignore the international situation altogether. During my residence in Jena, Gordon fell at Khartoum, and some of the German papers triumphed over the disaster as "the beginning of England's end," strangely comparing it to the defeat of Crassus by the Parthians. Though Bismarck always declared himself no *Colonialmensch*, there was a good deal of trouble between him and our Colonial or Foreign Office about Walfisch Bay and other South African points. "Relations were strained," and the strain was not relaxed by a sudden and, as then was considered, a vast increase in our navy. The Boer War, Edward VII's arrangements with France and Russia, the panic of naval rivalries, and the other causes of fear and hatred that led to the tragedy nearly thirty years later, were still unimagined. Our ageing Queen, with chastening affection, still cherished the German Courts as the best matrimonial preserve for her dynasty, and the familiar jest about the elephant and the whale was accepted as sufficient guarantee of peace. But we had suddenly ceased to be popular. Bismarck had often sneered at *Die englische Krankheit* (a pun upon the German name for the rickets), by which he meant the marriage between our Princess Royal and the German Crown Prince, parents of the present ex-Kaiser. Russia, as for some eighty years, was still at that time England's bogey-man, and fear of Russia's might (how empty a fear!) directed our foreign policy, while Bismarck was resolved at all costs to maintain the Russian friendship. He was also beginning to

look round, or others were looking round in spite of him, for a place in the sun suitable for the people whose unity he had secured after thirty years of remorseless effort.

Such international complications seemed far away from our life in idyllic villages and the tiny University town which retained, as laid up in lavender, the memories and even a few representatives of Germany's ethereal age. But still they involved us even there, as we found one New Year's night when, after joining amicably in singing "Gaudeamus Igitur" round the bonfire in the market-place, a few of us Englishmen and two Americans were sitting in a café together, and the cry arose, *Die Engländer heraus! Heraus!* We were driven violently into the street, smashing glass and tables in our course. At the door one of the Americans swung a tremendous blow full at the mouth of an aggressive student and knocked all his front teeth out. In a compact body we tried to walk away, but looking round we beheld what appeared to be the whole town population in one black mass rushing down upon us. For the next few days the faces of many among us were not fit to be seen, and we cultivated the privacy of our rooms, or the unfrequented woods. It was my first encounter with the mob spirit, which I have since experienced so often and so closely in my own country.

This incident and my observations on the football field showed me that the Germans, though not lissome or quick in movement, possessed an unusually high average of physical and muscular power. I put it down to their practice of gymnastics (*Turnerei*), common to all their schools, whereas it was then almost unknown among us. I thought of the stunted and puny figures in our big manufacturing towns—their narrow chests, their bad teeth, their brief and meagre lives. It is very humiliating for a patriot to discover that his race is being surpassed by foreigners in the measurement of pectorals, biceps, and calves. Where did a quiet and drudging people like the Germans obtain such an advantage? Obviously from their army training, which included, not only gymnastics but outdoor life, regular

exercise, and, most important of all, regular and wholesome, though dullish, food. Those were exactly the advantages supplied by our English universities, except that the food in them was not dull but varied and copious. Our universities turned out a fine average of physical development. If that was their function, they fulfilled it. But one must be rich to enjoy the advantages of a Seat of Learning. With what substitute for our Universities could we provide our poor, our working men? The Germans had found a substitute in the army, and to the army, I thought, we English must also look for our redemption from physical decay. The army must become the University of the poor! For two years or three years their training should last. As at the ancient Universities for the rich, a certain amount of mental information and instruction might be thrown in at leisure hours without infringing upon the ultimate purpose of health and strength. But, at all events, the sons of the workers must have an equal chance with the sons of landlords and manufacturers for developing a handsome, powerful, and healthy frame. Fresh air, good food, regular exercise—those are the staple necessities supplied by our highest education, and in a people's army the poor would find them all.

In this New Model, rich and poor were to serve upon exactly the same terms, so that comradeship in arms might form the basis of a true democracy, and class distinctions be obliterated. In the unlikely or, at least, rare event of any wealthy Englishman wishing to receive higher intellectual education than he would naturally obtain in this athletic manner, the old Universities would still be open to him after he had completed his course of training. I suggested that even the defence of our country might at some time require a larger force than we possessed in the middle 'eighties, but that was an object entirely subsidiary to the educational purpose of my scheme. I studied the German system with praiseworthy tedium, toiling through its textbooks and watching the drill, associating with the men in barracks,



trying their food (which on one occasion brought me into violent collision with the rations cook), and being present at great Kaiser manœuvres round Coblentz, which, unfortunately, were cut short by a terrible outbreak of cholera ; so that I had to abandon soldiering for a time and transfer my energy to the pleasant labour of cutting down trees to make a road through a forest in the Vosges.

But having obtained a fairly complete knowledge of the German army system, I developed my own scheme in an article which I sent round to the London monthly reviews and magazines. To my astonishment, they all rejected it in silence or with horrified alarm. Nor would my democratic proposal ever have reached the democratic mind had not W. T. Stead extended "hospitality" to an abstract of it in the "Pall Mall Gazette." Even that was a step-motherly hospitality. For in an editorial note he condemned it with all his power of righteous vituperation. All political and social writers, Liberal and Tory alike (I think there was no Labour Party in those days), combined in a howl of indignation and abhorrence, and I do not suppose that the Labour Party, if it had then existed, would have howled less vigorously than the rest. For about a week, as the most detested person in England, I was almost famous, and for the first time I knew the unhappiness of fighting an unpopular cause. "The acutest anguish known among men," said the old Persian, "is to have many thoughts at heart but no power." It is the pioneer's anguish. When, some fifteen years later, the cry for universal service, led by Lord Roberts, became insistent among the wealthy and dependent classes, I began to wonder where I had been wrong. At last I concluded that I had made too light of the evils springing from obedience, and that the real danger of military service was not a tendency to militarism (for small professional armies are naturally more inclined to war than general levies of the whole population, and a professional soldier who has never seen action feels like a born mother who has never had a child) ; but it was the suppression of personality

under the monotony of discipline, and that abnegation of self which we call obedience. I have always myself been much tempted to obedience as the easiest and most pleasant guide in thought and action. But one must watch obedience carefully as being the most dangerous of all virtues, and in any army, where it is physical as well as mental, it is likely to become a greater danger even than under ecclesiastical authority.

Closely allied to the dubious virtue of obedience was the habit which appeared to me the most deplorable in the German character : the worship of the State. The patient submission of the people to every rule, interference, or direction imposed upon them by officials was pitiful. Their obeisance before every kind of uniform, their adoration of every title, their acquiescence in every tiresome little regulation filled me with astonishment and pity. To threaten to plunge a bare bayonet into my heart for singing along the town wall at night—perhaps, for a musical sentry, that was natural. But to fine me five marks for swimming over the Elbe and back, how ludicrous ! And to drag me out of the right train because I had got in before I was put there, how irrational ! In the midst of the most beautiful forests to find tree trunks ringed with different colours so that you could not possibly lose your way ; to see notices stuck upon the branches proclaiming *Durchblick* or *Famose Aussicht*, because there was a bit of view from that point—it was not under those conditions that I sought communion with Nature. But the Germans are Socialists by birth, and love to be guided in the strait and narrow path.

By their respect for authority they gain a good deal. In the construction of their newer cities they display a fine sense of community and regulated care for all. I think that, before the war, no lower-middle or upper-working class in Europe enjoyed such outwardly happy and comfortable existence as the German. Their homes were clean and usually pleasant ; every evening, in any weather, for a very small sum they could enjoy the best music and the best

beer ; theatres were cheap, and so was food ; beautiful country walks by forests, lakes, or rivers were within reach of every city, and as the people preferred not to risk losing their way, they were given no chance of losing it. To myself a State-regulated life is as hateful as a State-regulated vice, but then I feel the English dislike of being interfered with, whether for my own good or not. The longer I live, the more clearly I perceive that whenever you touch the State you touch the devil, and I have often doubted whether I ought to rank myself among my friends as a Socialist, except as sympathising with their humane purposes. If only mankind were not a little lower than the angels, I suppose I should be an Anarchist, as Tolstoy was. When first I was in Germany, Nietzsche was still almost unknown, and my German friend urged me to translate and comment upon him. I wish I had done so, for then perhaps we should have heard less nonsense talked about that remarkable man as one cause of the war. With what joy I still read such sentences as the following :

“The coldest of all cold monsters is called the State. Coldly it utters its lies, and this lie crawls from its mouth : ‘I, the State, am the people.’”

“It is a lie ! Creators created peoples and established among them Belief and Love. Thus they served Life.

“Destroyers lay snares for the multitude, and call it the State. They dangle above the people the sword and a thousand vain desires.

“Where there is still a people, it does not comprehend the State, but hates it as the evil eye and as a sin against habits and rights.

“Every people speaks its own language of good and evil, which its neighbour does not understand. In its habits and rights it discovered its own tongue.

“But the State lies about good and evil in all languages. Whatever it says is a lie, and whatever it owns it has stolen.

“‘There is nothing on earth greater than myself,’ roars the monster ; ‘I am the regulating finger of God.’ And not the long-eared and the short-sighted only drop upon their knees.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “Also sprach Zarathustra,” Kap., “Vom neuen Götzen.”

But, say what the professional liars of propaganda may against those Huns, I cannot forget the many happy times I have spent in Germany. I well understood what so many of our soldiers said to me when we entered the country after the Armistice : " We somehow like these people. They're more like *us*." I still cannot dwell in a German village without a sense of idyllic peace. I cannot talk to German peasants or workmen without feeling that at heart we understand each other very well. I cannot mix with German educated society without recognising that these people are gifted with an unusual appreciation of the great arts and all intellectual interests. And that, in spite of my love for Heine and my intimate friendship with Goethe, I could never call Germany my spiritual home, must, I suppose, come from some deep-lying incapacity in myself for abstract thinking.



## CHAPTER VII

### IN THE FIFTH CIRCLE

*“ Fitti nel limo dicon : ‘ Tristi fummo  
Nell’ aer dolce che dal sol s’allegra,  
Portando dentro accidioso fummo :  
Or ci attristiam nella belletta negra.”*

*“ Inferno,” VII, 121-4.*

**B**EFORE my second sojourn in Germany, I had met Samuel Barnett, the Vicar of St. Jude's, White-chapel, and he had urged me to associate myself with the little “ University Settlement,” which then had a scanty habitation in Hooper's Square, and consisted of Thory Gardiner, Barnett's curate, Bolton King, and I think two others. When I returned, I found that Toynbee Hall had already been established in Commercial Street, and had received the blessing of Matthew Arnold, who assured the inmates that their names were written in the Book of Life. Persuasive though that assurance should have been, it was not the only reason why I lived in Petticoat Lane, close to the Hall, for two years, among bugs, fleas, old clothes, slippery cods' heads and other garbage, and contributed for many years longer such assistance as my knowledge of Greek, German, and military drill allowed. During those later 'Eighties one was carried along by a tide setting strongly towards “ social reform,” “ social economics,” and all the various forms of “ Socialism ” then emerging as rather startling apparitions. There was some talk of a revolution, more of “ the workers' rights,” most of “ Out-cast London.” Society was seized by one of its brief and fitful fevers for doing good, such as recur about twice a century. Cultured and uncultured alike went scurrying around to improve their poorer brethren. Single-roomed

homes, partitioned by rags of underlinen, were visited with horrified enthusiasm. Money was poured into Lord Mayors' Funds. Many a conscience was soothed, and enthralling descriptions of misery were added to dinner-table conversation. I was told that the Boxing Kangaroo was the only rival there, and the Trafalgar Square Riots of November, 1887, added a spasm of tremulous terror, such as a child might feel when, after venturing playfully into a dark room, it saw the grey shadow of something move.

To myself Socialistic theories were not new, nor was practical knowledge of "the workers." Some years before (I suppose about the end of 1880) I had joined Hyndman's Social Democratic Federation as one of its earliest members ; and for two or three years I had gone down regularly to Poplar to help Luke Paget, a Shrewsbury boy (afterwards Bishop of Chester), in his Christ Church Mission near the East London Docks. But the Federation was too abstract and doctrinal for my ignorant mind, and a Roman priest, apprehensive lest a taint of Protestant learning might endanger their immortal souls, thrashed the Irish stevedore boys away from my efforts to teach them reading just as they had ceased nudging and giggling over the indecent sound of certain syllables—the only syllables they always contrived to spell out with accuracy. Toynbee Hall promised better. It was not hampered by theories, and it appealed to a more cultivated intelligence. Of course, in those early days, it was the scene of some absurdity and some self-righteousness. Not so much among the inmates and other members themselves as among the solemn people who came down to encourage our "noble enterprise," there was a lot of pompous chatter about "shedding the light of University teaching among the dark places of the world." Even young graduates from Oxford and Cambridge were inclined to regard themselves as slightly superior to "the uneducated," forgetting that "the workers" were always incalculably ahead of them in the true education which is knowledge of life. Now and then a cheerful prig appeared,

after the model of the young woman who, being warned of the complexity in the character of different "cases" submitted to her care, replied: "Character presents no difficulty to me; I took a First in Moral Philosophy at Cambridge."

Sometimes, too, we were a little overwhelmed by the apostolic enthusiast, like the man who proclaimed the discovery of artificial manure as ensuring the salvation of mankind; or like another who, in a mixed society of men and women at dinner, discussed the "one real difficulty of sanitation" in its most intimate detail. Now and then we were cheered by a physicist who, in an argument upon miracles, would suddenly announce, "The mere presence of a man like Christ must naturally set the molecules in the organisms of bystanders in violent motion." And then, of course, there was a fine lot of talk about the influence of beauty and art. For some time we had among us the distinguished artist and designer, Charles Ashbee, who decorated the Hall dining-room to admiration until he put up "Pecca Fortiter" as one of the Golden Rules inscribed upon the walls, and the advice was deemed too robust for Whitechapel, or perhaps uncalled for and otiose. Many of us also hoped to alleviate the dullness of the denizens around Dalston Junction and Hackney Marshes by inculcating the beauties of literature, and for a long time I myself held readings in "Paradise Lost," the queerest thing about which, and by far the most instructive, was that large numbers of men and women came all the way from those dull but deserving districts to attend. Nor was beauty in more tangible forms unappreciated. Unhappily, the evidences of pleasure that I used to hear among the audience during concerts and plays cannot always be repeated. But the frank admiration of one miserably dirty and hideous little man may stand. For a singularly beautiful girl had come down from Hampstead to act in a play, and a lady beside him asked if he did not think her lovely. "Yus, lovely she is," he replied, "and I wish, I do, as I was a-goin'

to"—how shall I paraphrase his grave and natural appreciation?—"to enjoy her society till to-morrow morning!"

Thus, and with such occasional success, we strove by music, plays, lectures, and classes on nearly all subjects, by Travellers' Clubs, by various games, by a good library, by boys' clubs, and many other devices to diffuse such happiness as knowledge or beauty or health may bring. "To make the best common," "to promote useless knowledge," were among the watchwords of our band. Nor must one forget the annual show of loaned pictures, held in St. Jude's school. The works of modern artists, then counted among the best, were there to be seen—works by Burne Jones, Millais, Holman Hunt, Rossetti, Herkomer, Walter Crane, Alfred Parsons, and many more. The fame of the artists may now be passing, as all things pass, but their pictures attracted big crowds every Eastertide, and the present Whitechapel Gallery grew out of the exhibitions. We all took turns at watching the pictures, and sometimes we were asked to explain their meaning. So it was that I learnt one of the few perfect and satisfactory definitions that I know. For my friend, William Ingham Brooke, afterwards a pillar of Church and agriculture,<sup>1</sup> was passing slowly through the Gallery accompanied by an attentive herd when he came upon Millais' picture called "The Knight Errant." As is well known, it represents a woman clad only in her hair, and tied to a tree by a rope, which a man in armour is cutting with a sword. "Workers" are usually shy of nudity, and Brooke, rapidly perceiving their embarrassment, hastened to explain: "Yes, my friends, that depicts the glorious age of chivalry, when knights in armour went riding about the country, rescuing distressed damsels from other people's castles and carrying them off to their own."

Of course, the main advantages of Toynbee and similar "Settlements" fell to the devoted pioneers who went down there "to spread the light," etc. Many of us received great

<sup>1</sup> This fine-spirited man died as Rector of Barford, near Warwick June 1923.



enlightenment and some, in consequence, have risen to positions of distinction and emolument in Whitehall, Edinburgh, Cape Town, and other centres of government and social authority. I have known very few who did not shed their University priggishness within a year or so, and nearly all acquired the best kind of knowledge from our uneducated neighbours. But still I sometimes think that on the whole we did very little harm to others, and in a few instances we may even have increased the happiness and intellectual pleasure of those whom we hoped vaguely to benefit. Speaking of the young men among us who worked in the City or other business, Vaughan Nash, who himself became prominent down there during the Great Dock Strike, once said, "We shear the lamb all day, and temper the wind at night." And I think the wind was really tempered to many a fleeced and shivering lamb from Hoxton, Haggerston, and Bow. As far as mere teaching went, the lectures and classes maintained a high standard, and some of the teachers were persistent. My brother, the architect and entomologist, for instance, taught a large and constant class in drawing for many years with remarkable and unrecognised success. Mrs. Margaret Nevinson did the same with French and German, though her popular dancing-class was prohibited as insufficiently elevating. The constancy that filled Samuel Rawson Gardiner's history classes for many years showed a zeal for genuine knowledge all the more admirable because the lecturer possessed no other attractive quality. His lectures were dullish in style, and as to his personality, the first time I met him, I described him as possessing little charm of appearance :

"Gardiner," I wrote, "is one of the ugliest men ever seen. A face like an old fox, bad mouth, chin covered with rough, reddish beard ; teeth sticking out here and there like an animal's fangs ; long, heavy, ill-formed nose ; small blue eyes, much bleared ; high, retreating forehead running up to a bald peak ; long, ungainly body that seems ready to fall to pieces at any moment ; knees always bent, arms

hanging loose, coat and trousers bagged and bulged in every ugly curve or angle ; but within it all the calmest, gentlest soul, and the humblest."

Perhaps it was of some advantage to the roaring young Socialists of the day to be brought up sharp against learning and humility like his ; and we had a choice of many first-rate regular lecturers besides—far better lecturers than I ever heard in Oxford. Churton Collins could inspire a love for English literature, though I seldom agreed with his criticism. Philip Wicksteed was excellent on Dante, and, I suppose, quite as good on economics, though I never understood his doctrine. Besides, we had all manner of famous men to talk to us on Saturday evenings and special occasions : Lowell of the " Biglow Papers " ; Seeley of " *Ecce Homo* " and the British Empire ; Bosworth Smith of Harrow and Islam ; Leslie Stephen, the unerring rationalist, who took us immense walks, padding along like a wolf, while I trotted by his side ; Charles Booth, shipowner and organiser of London's economic survey ; Frederic Harrison, the worshipper and critic of mankind, then far from a century old ; Lord Ripon, the suspected friend of Indians ; Leonard Courtney, too just to escape the oyster shell in politics ; Lord Wolseley, still glorious with Egyptian failure ; Lord Herschell, the model of equity ; the old Duke of Argyll (at the Mansion House), endowed by nature and inheritance to be President of the Inverary Naturalist Society ; Paul Methuen, still far from Magersfontein ; Arthur Sidgwick, of Rugby and Oxford, witty even in Greek prose ; Henry Nettleship, of Oxford, who could be modest in Latin, and while crossing crowded Bishopsgate with me continued to argue the extreme uncertainty of immortality ; Augustus Jessopp, the scholared priest of Arcadian Norfolk ; Holman Hunt and Herkomer, artists both, however much forgotten now ; Alfred Ainger, of the Temple, so far-away the finest lecturer I have ever heard that no one else counts in comparison ; and Walter Pater, of Oxford, now forgotten, I am told,

except by a few, who may like to hear the description I wrote of him at the time when he lectured to us, modestly reading from an essay already published and familiar :

“ November 23, 1890 : Evening at Toynbee for Pater's lecture. Vast crowd ; Cockerell ” (Sydney Carlyle, afterwards of the Fitzwilliam in Cambridge) “ and a lot of other familiar spirits. Pater is apparently a man of about fifty ; sturdier than I expected, with the look of a French colonel in face and bearing ; baldish, but hair still brown ; enormous dark moustache ; eyes very deep-set in a yellowish white face ; concave nose, curving inwards from root to tip ; vast forehead hanging over the eyes, which he habitually kept nearly closed ; an impassable, insensate look of profound meditation, as though this outer world could never pierce to the shrine where the quiet mind sits contemplating an unseen universe—the idealised reflection of the world around ; in manner he was like a good statue of Buddha. He read his paper from sheets, perhaps just torn out of his ‘ Appreciations,’ for it was almost word for word his essay there. Whilst reading he shut his eyes when a common lecturer would have looked at the audience, and he spoke in a low and quite unbroken tone, never faltering or missing a word or tripping at a parenthesis through all the mazes of his style. Once he looked up, and, becoming a simple man, asked if we could hear. Then he went on as before. The sweat stood out on his forehead, but otherwise he seemed to have no more connection with the words than a pump with the water. The essay was an admirable estimate or analysis of the best in Wordsworth, but far too subtle and involved for a single reading. What the audience made of it I don't know, but the applause was tentative and subdued, perhaps because he had set us all to a minor key, and we were afraid of appearing brutally noisy and stupidly active. When he had finished, he vanished at once, probably with a sense of failure.”

Among other celebrities whom we had the encouragement of meeting during those years were Mrs. Humphry Ward, whom, in that age of regretful unbelief, “ Robert Elsmere ” had raised to the height of controversial fame ; Edward Carpenter (to be my honoured friend in later life, but at our first meeting, December, 14, 1887, thus described : “ Author

of 'Towards Democraey' appeared for a minute after dinner ; a 'charming man,' with mild brown eyes, grey-brown hair and short beard, fine, irregular face, grey flannel shirt-collar ; altogether pleasing, earnest, sweet-tempered, modest, and clever. Talked about the U.E.S. in the North, how some 'swells' get hold of it, build a college, leave the people no voice in the choice of lectures, etc., and so the thing dies ") ; Grant Allen (of whom after our first meeting, May 14, 1890, I wrote, " Was all sugar, and seems to be a pleasant and gentle person ; tall and thin, with plenty of grey or whitish hair and a pointed beard ; light eyes, with a boyish look in them, a long and sensuous mouth, and a nose that seems to have grown much longer than was at first intended, arched, thin, and pliant, giving him a somewhat foxy look. Some converse with him, mainly about the return of the Celt, and our national type. He has a lot to say, and says it well ; is more tolerant of contradiction than most. Appears to be about forty-two, and must have done a lot of various work in his time ") ; and Beatrice Potter, who was then living in the Whitechapel region as a working tailor girl. Perhaps it would interest Mrs. Sidney Webb to read a few rough notes I wrote down after going with her to witness the struggle for work outside the Dock Gates ; for Dock Labour was a prominent problem in those days of the contest for the " Docker's Tanner " :

" May 11, 1887 : At Cartwright Buildings by 7.15. Met Miss Potter and Miss Pycroft, with a man who had dropped from policeman to dock-labourer for one small slip. He showed us the dock-labourers going into London Dock ; the clanging bell, the chain, the police, the ticket-holders, the short struggle for the few vacancies, the following search for work, down to the cage, a large enclosed shed where casuals wait till two o'clock on the chance of an odd job. Out of 100 or so, generally two are taken on. When one of the turned-away began to lament his lot to us, the others shut him up sharp. They say the strong men often get the tickets and sell them for twopence each. One threw his hat at the distributor, otherwise there was no violence. Talked



a good deal to Miss Potter, and again was forced to marvel at that clear, analytic mind. 'The province of the statistician,' she said, 'is to establish empirical laws, of the personal observer ultimate laws. The social observer should have no prepossessions' (I think that was the word), 'but should collect from the statistician and personal observer, such as School Board people or rent-collectors, and build his laws by help of imagination from cases he has himself inspected. Class or trade exclusiveness is the hope of the future; iron trade-unions with rigid limits, so that a man will not have more children than can enter the unions. The present lowest classes must die out in higher workhouses or reformatories, where they would be made to work for each other. Foreign competition will have to be prevented by a kind of international Socialism.' She would not hear of payment according to need."

I cannot now tell how far this represented Beatrice Potter's deliberate opinions. Thirty-five years have passed. But at the time I wrote :

"I'm afraid there is something a little hard about it all. Unhappily, man has bowels of compassion, and the individual case appeals so much more to compassion than an undefined and unimaginable 'class.'"

I am not sure, but perhaps Mrs. Sidney Webb would be interested by another entry made a few years later (February 15, 1893) :

"Went to Mrs. Sidney Webb, and enjoyed some blue-book talk chiefly about County Councils and School Boards. She spoke of Mrs. Fawcett and her bias against males. Also of various great meetings she had addressed, and the incapacity of women even for the work regarded as their own; the absurdity of the present craze for women as being necessarily cleverer and better in public positions. Spoke also of X.Y. and her loathing of him, though she admitted he was the most attractive man to women she had ever known, and she had herself felt the attraction. Also of Herbert Spencer and his savage disappointment when she turned Socialist and married; his withdrawal of his 'Life and Letters' from her hands; his new work founded on

statistics already ten years old. For herself, she has become a Socialist with the swing of the times. I suppose every other party is impotent now. She retains all her beauty and charm, her clear precision of thought and utterance, her radiant look, with the attraction a rather hard and learned woman has when she allows a touch of the feminine to peep through, even in the delicacy of her shoes."

But great in their various ways as were so many people who gave us their blessing in the East End, the vital heart of the whole business was Samuel Barnett himself. It is hard for me to speak of this remarkable man, for I knew him for twenty-five years, at times very intimately. When living in Whitechapel, I saw him nearly every day, and on Sunday mornings he usually invited me to discuss with him many perplexing and intimate questions of life. In public affairs I served under him year after year upon various committees, trying to act upon his ideal of "personal service" rather than being content with theories, statistics, and the fashionable chatter. He would never have wasted a minute of life over lost causes, any more than I have ever wasted a minute; but I did my best to support him in those victorious causes which heavy-hearted despair and torpid inertia call lost. As Browning said of Wordsworth, I, in common with many others, lived in his mild and magnificent eye; and many of us could go on to say that we made him our pattern to live and to die, though we did so without the smallest success.

Knowledge makes it all the harder for me to explain the secret of his power. Except for large, deep brown, and very luminous eyes, he had no "physical advantages." He was small, frail, bald, far from "good-looking," and entirely unathletic, though he played tennis with a subtle adroitness akin to cunning. To people he liked his smile was quick and sympathetic, but he was far from being one of those winning priests who smile and smile, and whose arm seems always threatening to go round your neck. His look more commonly expressed indignation or impatience. Watts in his

portrait just caught that expression, though "The Prophet," as some people called him, always tried to conquer impatience, as prophets should, and though he frequently repeated the true saying: "He that believeth shall not make haste." Among my own many sins he often rebuked that of not suffering fools gladly, attributing to me the very weakness to which he was himself exposed. And resistance to that temptation must have cost him an unceasing struggle; for God knows he had plenty of fools to suffer!

As Watts caught the impatient expression, Herkomer caught the interested and almost benign, though half-satiric, smile with which he listened to something humorous or outrageously paradoxical. He welcomed humour and irony in others, and enjoyed their most fantastic speculations, but he was preserved from the dangers of humour in himself. He was never ironic, and though possessing a fine satiric power, he seldom used it. Sometimes it burst out when he was speaking of the rich man's indifference, and Octavia Hill once told me she thought he went wrong in not trusting the goodwill of the rich enough. He had none of the attraction that the jolly, jolly Christian of Chesterton's ideal appears to possess for some, and neither to rich nor poor was he ever hail-fellow-well-met.

Nor was he in the least eloquent. In speaking and writing his style was unmistakable, but unattractive. It was a marvel how he put thought so fine into form so little calculated to please. It was a style so easy to burlesque that all of us could reel off imitations upon any occasion, such as the fall of a horse or the lighting of the street-lamps. There was no passionate out-pouring, no attempt at oratory or splendid language or moving appeal. It was thought cut to the bare bone; short sentences crammed as full as they could hold and then left. To me, detesting all rhetoric, it came with relief; but literary or emotional people went away disappointed. "Protests against error become in their turn errors"; "Idolaters recognise no change"; "Unpopularity is no condemnation, but neither is it an

acquittal ” ; “ The sense of sin has been the starting-point of progress ” ; “ Quarrelling is the luxury of security ”—how admirable such sentences are ! Each would make a text for an essay. But when a speech or a sermon is chiefly composed of such sentences, and the ordinary mind is left to make what best it can of it, the ordinary mind refuses to be bothered, and it calls the speaker dull. You might as well try to rouse a congregation by reading Bacon’s “ Essays ” or a chapter of Proverbs. Sometimes, but rarely, a touch of malice was added, as in his saying : “ The modern Jew is Jacob without the ladder.”

“ Broad Church ” is an obsolete term, and “ philanthropy ” stinks like the apothecary’s ointment, but, I suppose, most people would hurriedly summarise Barnett as a Broad Churchman and philanthropist. As to philanthropy, he certainly did create or inspire all manner of societies and institutions for advancing knowledge, health, and the happy reasonableness that is expected to come of culture. “ The poor need the best,” was one of his repeated sayings, though no one ever believes it. No beauty, he thought, could be a waste in daily life, any more than the box of precious ointment was wasted on the feet of Christ. His vision reached far beyond the common ideals of sanitation, eugenics, and State control of the crazy. But with all his insistence upon beauty in common life, he never mistook memories for hopes—was never tempted by pretty revivals of the handicrafts, maypoles, and cheaping-steeds that Morris made the fashion of the time. He was a Futurist, always looking forward, letting the dead bury their dead, and leaving past and existing beauty and institutions to preserve themselves only if they were still animated by a living spirit.

It is true, he remained a Churchman. He recognised the value of body and form. He was rather fond of repeating Jowett’s saying : “ The great man is he who does original things in a conventional way.” There was still room, he thought, for originality within the conventional ways of the



Church, and the Church had sufficient spiritual power left in her for change and life. But his proposals for a democratic and elected Church implied a lively change, enough to make a Bishop shiver. In regard to dogma and belief, his sole insistence was upon the inward and spiritual life. One day I asked him what he would say to anyone who inquired whether he believed the resurrection of Christ to be a physical fact. He at once answered, "I should say No. But at the same time I should show how much more marvellous and vital His spiritual resurrection has been." By such interpretation he endeavoured at one time to induce me to enter the Church as his curate. And he nearly succeeded. That was one of his greatest miracles, as my escape was my most miraculous escape.

The heart of his power lay, I think, in a spiritual insight delicately sensitive to the difference between life and death. If the brains were out, the thing would die, no matter how splendid and reverend and beloved the poor corpse might be. He laughed at me once for saying, "All change is good," but he never doubted that there can be no life without change, and by quick intuition he perceived the moment when change must come, or life be lost. "Idolaters recognise no change," he said, as I have quoted, and he was the greatest of Leonoclasts. Idolaters, worshippers of dolls, like the unhappy wife in the "Master Builder," people who cling to systems, institutions, or symbols after the life is out—those roused his impatience more than any. "A mind must be thin and narrow, timid and hard," he used to say, "that lives under the law, and not under the spirit."

We were all revolutionary then, though not so revolutionary, of course, as everyone is now. And yet I remember maintaining that Barnett was the extreme revolutionist of us all. His spirit was like leaven, or like new wine in old skins. He never formed habits or idolised machines. When everyone was extolling and imitating his idea of "Settlements," he quietly said to us, "I do not preach the duty of settling among the poor. I simply repeat the command-

ment, 'Love God.''' Of all the leaders I have known, he almost alone fulfilled the most difficult duty of leadership : he so hated idols that he was always ready to lead a revolution against himself.

To be sure he was not the only one to lead that revolution. In a monastic establishment where there were no vows, the Abbot could not escape criticism, and the criticism was often violently hostile. For one cause of rage or another, two or three groups swarmed off to other parts of the south or east of London, like old Greeks sailing away from the mother-city to found Hellenist colonies among the barbarians. Thory Gardiner (afterwards of Colchester, Farnham, and Canterbury), by far the finest and most attractive spirit among the denizens of that wayward monastery, was also suddenly lost, in rage or grief ; I never knew why, for I never asked. For myself, as I never expect an incarnation of the Deity in absolute perfection, I remained unconcerned. Then, as always, I kept in mind the saying of Thoreau :

“ If I knew for a certainty that a man was coming to my house with the conscious design of doing me good, I should run for my life as from that dry and parching wind of the African deserts called the simoon, for fear I should get some of his good done to me—some of its virus mingled with my blood.”

As I knew a good deal about Greek, and something about English literature, I talked on these subjects to anyone in the East End who cared to listen. As I was a good distance-runner, I led a merry pack of human hounds, meeting at Aldgate Pump, and drawing Mile End and Cambridge Heath Road. And as I was an enthusiast for military training, I took command of a Cadet Company in the hopes of ensuring some small amount of benefit to the enfeebled and undersized youth of Whitechapel and Shadwell, until my ideal of the Workers' University under General Service could be ordained. The idea of that Cadet Company (the first ever started for working youths) was due to Francis Fletcher Vane (afterwards a baronet), at that time resident

in Toynbee. He was one of those who, like the Chinese, regard their ancestors with pious adoration ("Blue Bloode in every Veine," as our Toynbee satiric poet wrote), and I think he rather favoured me because he discovered that some of my ancestors were buried in the cathedral at Carlisle, his county town. He may also have discovered that one of them, being the original of Dick Turpin, was executed at York as a highwayman, just as one of his ancestors was executed in London as a traitor. Unhappily, though superbly conscious of nobility's obligations, his command of detail did not equal his command of ideas. When protest was raised by a mere civilian committee against the apparent chaos in the Company's stores, he wrote in reply : "If this sort of thing goes on, we shall have the middle classes criticising, and the upper classes doing the work—a reversal of the natural order of things." And so the command fell upon me, much against my will, for I was conscious of only middle-class qualifications for military rank.

Still, I did somehow contrive to command that Company for ten or twelve years, drilling it regularly two or three times a week, first in Whitechapel and, for a much longer period, in Shadwell, beside the Basin where ships enter London Dock. In such forms of pleasure, regularity is the first necessity, and once when my subaltern missed a drill, I wrote to him : "I hope you are dead, for nothing but death could excuse your absence," and he never appeared again. But some knowledge of military affairs was also requisite, and for that I attended the drill of the Grenadier and Coldstream Footguards in the Tower and Wellington Barracks, going through the whole thing as private, N.C.O., lieutenant, captain, and major with great diligence, so that in the end I drilled the cold-eyed critics in the ranks of those famous battalions with such success that I "Passed School" with 98 per cent of the marks and special distinction—an honour I am more proud of than any reward for scholarship. But it was a nervous business, especially when, at the

beginning, if I gave a wrong command, the whole battalion instinctively did the right thing.

The idea of Cadets soon spread. Octavia Hill encouraged it for her "Settlement" and Hall in Southwark, and the prestige of that remarkable woman's name gained large numbers of supporters. When she took the chair at a council of our officers, I used to compare her in my mind to Queen Elizabeth among her admirals and pirate explorers. For the solid, little figure with powerful head, masses of loose grey hair, large, benign, but watchful brown eyes and mouth closing tight like an unyielding steel trap when she was displeased, displayed all the great Queen's indomitable resolution, power of command, personal affection or dislike, and scrupulous regard for every halfpenny spent, or received. By some divine instinct she selected Colonel Albert Salmond of the Sherwood Foresters Militia as her chief officer. A divine instinct indeed! for seldom was I more mistaken in my first estimate of a man. He had the look of a melancholic pessimist, incapable of enthusiasm or decision; and, after our first meeting, I said to myself, "Never will I allow my beautiful Company to fall under the command of so depressing a blighter." But within a few weeks I perceived that he was one of the few inspired and unselfish enthusiasts I have ever known. The War Office allowed me to unite my Company to the Battalion he founded—"The First Cadets, the Queen's, Royal West Surrey Regiment" formerly the "Second Foot"—and for many years I continued to work under his command with entire confidence and devotion. He was indeed a great man. Though he had business of his own, as solicitor and coal-owner, his whole heart was fixed upon the Battalion, and, being untrammelled by humour, he took it with a seriousness that no general in command of an army upon the front in the Great War could have surpassed. To him our little Battalion, with headquarters in Southwark and Companies attached in Westminster, Paddington, Shadwell, Stepney, and other districts, represented the glory and strength of



our country. Often, while he was inspecting my Company in a shed or schoolroom down by the London Docks, I have stood at his side in front of the little line of shabby, ill-fed, anæmic Cockney boys, and heard him say with the assurance that only perfect sincerity can give : “ Members of D Company, 1st Cadet Battalion, The Queen’s, I am much pleased with your drill and steadiness on parade. I noticed with regret that Number 6 in the rear rank once turned his head instead of looking to his front. But on the whole you are a credit to the Battalion and to the country. And remember this : the eyes of the Horse Guards are upon this Battalion. Right—turn. Dis—miss ! ”

Yes, he was a great man, and all who served under him delighted in the service. But during the Boer War he went to South Africa with his Regiment, and was wounded. Once on my way up to Pretoria towards the end of the war, I passed the hospital where he was lying, and I met his nurse on the platform, who told me he was doing well. My pass would not allow me to stop, and soon afterwards he died of his wounds. Other excellent officers who were with me in the Battalion have taken his place in succession, and one of them commands it still (1923). Several of my Company served in the Boer War, and, I suppose, some in the Great War too, in which, at all events, my best of all subalterns, Roos, was killed. For myself, I look back upon my labour in the Battalion with unmixed pleasure. It made me acquainted with army men of the best type, such as Paul Methuen, then Colonel of the Scots Guards, who used to come down in early days to help me with the drill. And I learnt a good deal about military life and organisation in general, especially in the matter of Supply ; for I had often to act as Quartermaster to the Battalion during its week’s camp at Aldershot, Churn, or Shorncliffe, setting up the tents, and arranging for the rations—a troublesome task. Yet after a field-day during our first and worst camp with the brigades at Aldershot, I wrote that “ I was borne along upon the full tide of human felicity.”

As an officer of Cadets, I also gained intimate knowledge of East End life, for I could go to visit the fellows in their homes without patronage or pretence at doing them good, but merely in the course of Army Regulations. Some of them have risen to what working people call fortune, and till quite lately, while upon the streets of London, I have seen a man spring suddenly to attention upon a coal cart or while selling papers, and give me a superb military salute, forgetful of shirt sleeves, ragged jacket, and head without cap. My delight in that little Battalion was partly the pleasure that a conductor feels in leading his orchestra, and hearing them do the right thing at the right moment. Partly it came from comradeship with a particularly fine set of fellow-officers, and from close acquaintance with East End life. But one must also take into account the glamour of war, shining in those days with brilliant illusion. Philosophers and economists at Toynbee strongly objected to my Company while it was in Whitechapel. Some said my band in the courtyard disturbed their meditations. Others called my drill unsocial and uneconomic. I countered by asking the cash price of a human soul, and by quoting Milton's definition of education as "that which fits a man to discharge justly, skilfully, and magnanimously all the offices, private and public, of peace and war." But my protests did not impress them, and when they continued to contemplate my little formations with critical hostility, I marched, like Alexander, with drums beating and colours flying, further east.

All this martial circumstance ought to have overcome my plaguey shyness. All the sharp decision of military commands ought to have overcome my torturing hesitation. But shyness and hesitation still laid their blighting curse upon me, and those five or six years (say from the end of 1885 to the end of 1891) were a period of extreme wretchedness, sometimes hardly endurable. I tried to make money by various means—by helping in a biographical dictionary; by writing a "Life of Schiller," for a series; by pretending

to teach history at Bedford College (though, outside the history of Greece, I knew none); by lecturing for the University Extension Society upon German literature, and for various local societies upon Shakespeare and Browning, over the elucidation of whose poems, especially of "Sordello," I spent many toilsome days with my friend George Bruce, the devoted servant of the Board Schools. But I detested teaching in all its forms, and was probably no good at it. I detested London and all its population. I longed to be out in the wild world, but could find no issue. I knew I ought to plunge into journalism or even dare to write books, but, except for one or two small things that were thrust upon me, I studiously avoided writing for fear of doing it badly. To do other things badly was distressing, but endurable; to write badly then seemed intolerable. In a diary of May, 1887, I find the significant entry :

"I am following my usual device of doing a hateful and difficult thing for the object of avoiding a more difficult and hateful, which, in this case, is writing. How I tremble and grow cold at the thought of trying to write—to write and publish for money ! "

I suppose most people feel that timidity about doing the one and only thing they have any hope of doing, even decently ; but with me it was a haunting terror, and portentous as is the quantity that I have written in the last thirty years, I still approach each new task as a novice—with a fear and trembling that nothing but hunger or conscience could overcome. I was not friendless ; I was not idle ; I was not even beggarly poor. But wretched beyond description I certainly was. Once, in November, 1887, after a crowded and not exceptionally unsuccessful day, I could write :

"Came home depressed, and lay awake till three, sunk in misery, while visions of all my failures and sins passed continually before my eyes. This half-hearted life, without grandeur, without concentrated aim, is worse than death. What, then, is wrong ? Ambition, vanity, selfishness, or

mere brutality ? When I think of ten years ago, how terrible is my condition ! I am sinking, sinking down to hell, and there is no one to help me."

It is amazing, but that hideous distress of mind was almost continuous. On May 22, 1888, I wrote:—

"Read a lot of stuff about Schiller, with growing dissatisfaction, that left me hopelessly melancholy all night. I shall never do anything worth the doing now. No faith, no hope, no charity left. All is swallowed up in vague ambition, for which I cannot even fix the object. Was haunted by bright visions of Jena and other places again. This seems a regular accompaniment of my melancholy. If anyone is taught by experience I ought to be, for I have made every mistake a man can make. Old age and experience tell me I have been a fool my whole life long. I have been led by passions and blinded ; worn my heart on my sleeve ; revelled in error and obscurity ; and there is no health in me. But my enthusiasm used to be genuine, and my admiration passionate. Thought long of my lost friend at night, and in early morning had rather beautiful dreams, which I forget, though one was a conversation with Pericles."

Again, on August 9, 1890, after a long evening with Willie Price, the electrical engineer, who had been describing his work among the men and machines in Silvertown, I wrote :

"The older I get, the more clearly I know that sharp intercourse and contact with men is the one thing needful for happiness. And here am I, with a dim vista of years unlit by any hope or chance of such. All night I was nearly insane with rheumatism and depression about my way of life. Towards morning I had the worst sort of dream : I had gone back to Oxford with some vague idea of writing something, much as I have at present. I had comfortable rooms given me, and everything started fair. I went to the Cathedral and met two old acquaintances, X. and Y. (or rather three separate personations of the latter), upon the same languid business. We greeted each other mournfully, and the anthem began, a boy's clear voice singing the words, 'Working, and not working in vain.' The horror of the whole scene almost drove me mad."



By what particular interpretation the Freudians might pervert those dreams, I cannot say. To my simple mind they only show that my energies had not found their natural course. They were not running upon the lines of excellence, nor was my life "complete." And so I was debarred from happiness, according to the old Greek's definition. It was by timidity, self-distrust, and that fatal hesitation arising from a habit of seeing both sides of every question so clearly that decision became impossible—it was by these accursed characteristics that my energies were clogged or diverted. I have dwelt upon the pitiful, or even despicable, misery of those wasted years, not so much as a warning (for I do not find the unhappy error of self-distrust very common among the young), but merely to express my heartfelt sympathy with the few who may at any time be tormented in like manner. Let them be assured that one man has lived whose tortures their own cannot surpass. And yet he has survived, and has earned for himself a false reputation for qualities exactly the opposite to those which lay at the basis of his nature and held him so long in bondage.

Through all those melancholy years I found only one road of escape—the escape from London. I then began the pensive habit of all-night walks, starting late on Saturday and walking on and on till Sunday evening, when one might hope to sleep. Tourists in Switzerland used to make a fussy adventure of getting up in a hotel to see the sun rise, but I have never known anyone beside myself who knew what joy it is to pass through the Surrey woods at night, or along the Chiltern Hills, and listen to the almost silent noises of creatures moving in the leaves ; to watch the stars setting without a word ; to smell the morning just approaching ; to hear the lark suddenly declare the day ; to feel in one's eyes the pleasure of browns reappearing among the blues and blacks ; and at last, after many hours of gradual glory, to behold the sun. Such vigils were fine loopholes for escape from London's charnel-house, but the escape was brief. Finer because longer was the redemption of walking away

for days together ; westward, following the sun, if possible, but in any direction provided that the path led away from London. On those occasions of exquisite relief, I found the anguish of mental indigestion, which had almost become habitual, suddenly, as from a draught of elixir, relax its clutch at the mere sight of the train which was to carry me away to some starting-point beyond the suburbs. With unimaginable delight, I thus plodded on foot through wide regions of England, Wales, and the Scottish Lowlands, sometimes with a friend, far more often, and always better, alone. Through the fen country I went, through Cambridgeshire, Suffolk, part of Norfolk, Essex, along the south coast, along the South Downs and the North, through Derbyshire up to the Yorkshire moors, across the Yorkshire dales, along Hadrian's Wall from Carlisle to Newcastle, up Eskdale into Yarrow and Ettrick, down through the Pentland hills to Teviotdale, along the Northumbrian coast into Scotland, Dunbar and Edinburgh, all through the Isle of Arran, once through Carlyle's country to Craigenputtock, two or three times through the Westmorland and Cumberland hills ; two or three times through North Wales, and along the South Wales coast ; from Goring to Savernake, Stonehenge and the New Forest, and along many other roads, all happy, provided only that London lay behind my back. In fact, so possessed was I with the hatred of cities in general that I long kept the idea of waving farewell to urbanity and wandering through the West of England, reciting Milton to the untutored Areadians for my living. Some may think that the choice of Milton would have kept my livelihood scanty ; but Maurice Baring has told us that Russian peasants delight in hearing even translations of "Paradise Lost," because, as they say, it gives them a kind of "sweet feeling," and English peasants, hearing the superb origin l, would surely feel a greater delight ! However, in those days my will was so uncertain that, unhappily, I never realised my idea. With melancholy merriment, I used often to compare myself to a wretched suicide of those days who,

after killing his wife, wrote in his final message to the world : ' I am determined, or rather I feel disposed to be determined.' The poor creature admitted that he " had read 1300 volumes conscientiously through," and I suppose I was saved from his fate only by having read far less than half that number.

But to give some idea of the blessed, though brief, redemption which these intervals of happiness afforded me, I may quote a few passages from the accounts which I wrote daily, so that I might recall the joy of freedom when I was again a slave. In April, 1888, for instance, walking about the Yorkshire moors with Willie Brooke, a true Yorkshireman, after we had come through the Co-operative Fustian Factory at Hebden Bridge, where even the babies seemed to be clothed in " foostian," I wrote :

" Made our way up the valley till we reached true country and were on the veritable moors. At the head of a gully to the right we found a Jacobean house or shooting lodge, facing south, with view far up a valley westward to the thin watershed that turns the streams into Lancashire. Knocking at the door, we were greeted by the keeper's wife, a worn, saddish, but devoutly honest woman, old before her time. The keeper was seated at the kitchen table, in velveteens and silver buttons ; a fine Danish type, with tawny hair and beard, and the brightest blue eyes ever seen. Both spoke broadest Yorkshire—' a coop o' tay,' ' frae,' ' throng ' (busy), and the strangest past participles. We went round the silent, empty house, where the mountain winds blow for ever, and I was full of joy till he told us that Burnley lay only a few miles over the watershed, and the smoke even there checked the growth of the young firs. Both complained rather of loneliness, and, though he thought the ' mawr ' the finest thing in the world, and shooting the noblest sport, he began to see he might tire of it and turn to farming. Their daughter was prenticed to a milliner in Hebden Bridge. After the ' coop o' tay ' we went with him across the moor northward. I asked for Within Heights, and he was much impressed to hear there was a real book written about it. We went some way round to get a look of it, and, sure enough, far away we saw a shining roof under the hillside, and that was Wuthering Heights.

“The glory of that passage over the moor filled me with joy. From the top, the northern valley suddenly opened before us, with line on line of hill in wide, long ranges. Below were the chimneys of Keighley, and far away the higher ridges, deeply streaked with snow. All was transfused with light, gleams of bright sunshine and purple shadow, under a driving N.W. wind. The further clouds were fringed with long sweeps of rain, curving and crossing with the wind. He told us stories of poaching, that is fast dying out, and of the rough old natives who had lived by hand-weaving, poaching, and a bit of farm. A ghastly story of three men coming to a lonely farm, and asking the farmer for the money he had just got for the sale of a cow. They took the money, and drank everything in the house, ‘milk and all,’ and as they went, he said, ‘I se know ye, be sure.’ And they said, ‘Aye, but ye woant know us long.’ So they took the old muzzle-loader and put down powder from the flask and cut up some leaden spoons into slugs and shot him. They were never caught, but the keeper said one went to America ‘for other crimes,’ and was shot by a spring-gun while robbing a safe. We parted with sorrow between Within and Haworth, and I shall never see him again. A thoughtful man, free from scorn even of such ignorance as mine. Once I said to him, ‘What’s that dog-kennel doing there so near the moor?’ and he took me by the arm and whispered in my ear the word ‘Hens!’ so that Brooke might not laugh at my ignorance. We were soon at Haworth; the church much altered, and indeed rebuilt; association quite gone. But the grey stone vicarage, staring over the churchyard to the steep hill across the town, is still the same. At a little photo-shop was a stout and honest old woman with a strong, meek face and copious grey hair, who had been in Charlotte’s class at Sunday school for seven and a half years, and remembered Emily and all of them well. She spoke very highly of their father. Mr. Nicholls, who married Charlotte, is still alive in Ireland, and has married again. Strange to think of.”

Next day we were at Skipton Castle, Barden Tower, and the Strid, all so full of history and association; and so to Kilnsey Crag. On the following morning we climbed Buckden Birks, where “the wind continually drove us from the vestige of a path,” and came down again upon the



Wharfe near Yokenthwaite, and from there, passing north where the road splits at Beggermonds, we reached a minute village called Oughtershaw, where my grandfather had built a house, then possessed by my uncle, Charles Woodd—a very beautiful house too. Seeking food, we entered the “shop,” and were received by a singularly charming woman :

“ Wife of a kind of keeper, waller, joiner, and general estate agent. Hearing of my relationship, she seemed pleased and smiled a welcome in every word. A child of 21 months was asleep in an old-fashioned wooden cradle on rockers, to which she gave a pull now and then to keep it going, as she bustled about the room, making ready our ‘soop o’ tay.’ The room was shop, sitting-room, kitchen, and nursery combined, and was a model of well-ordered confusion, every corner full of miscellanies, and yet no hugger-mugger. The baby was called Deborah Jane after the woman’s mother, who used to live near Hawes, but now had been forced to migrate with the rest of the family to the mills at Nelson. The other ‘childer’ came in as soon as school was loosed—George of seven, Bill of six or so, and Hannah of nearly three, an enterprising child, with a wooden box as a cart and an india-rubber doll ; already she can write—‘sermons of writin’ ’ said the woman. For the present schoolmaster is ‘wonderful at gettin childer forrard’ . . . We talked about life there, the loneliness, floods, scarcity of work, etc. She does a bit of baking, though nearly all bake for themselves. She gives a ‘soop o’ tay’ to the childer coming to school from far-off farms, in exchange for ‘a bit o’ milk or such like.’ Driving the savage gander from the door, she showed us where her man was working. He was a stout, ruddy man of thirty-five or forty, engaged in building up a bit of wall that perhaps he had knocked down on purpose to build it up again. He remembered my grandfather and the rest with regret, and would have been quite happy if the gentry would allow themselves to be amused as of old. He showed us towards Summer Water ; we climbed the hill (Fleet Moss it was), took one look at the valley and Ingleborough blue-black against the sun, cloud-crested far away, and then sank down past that rather wretched lake, into Wensley Dale.”

The next day also we met some enviable characters as we walked over the watershed into Ingleton :

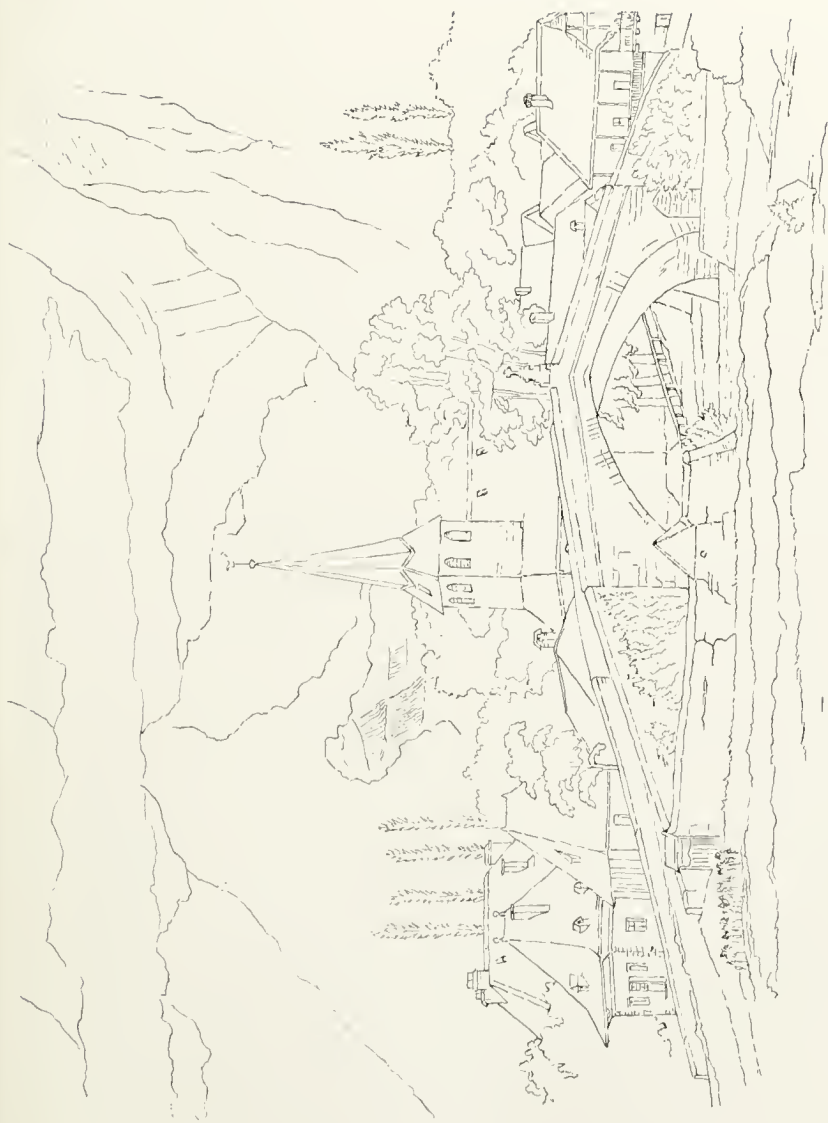
“ An elderly native asked to walk with us some quarter mile up to the next village ; a shrewd and even poetic man, who discoursed on death—sudden death—as ‘ a way of passing from this troublesome world to a better ’ . . . We held on through deep snow-drifts under a sky now brilliant with colours along the top of Cam Fell. Met a farmer, tenant of my uncle, holding a large farm at the rent of £200, which he could still make and live besides, though things had been bad lately, he thought from bad seasons rather than bad times. He spoke highly of his landlord, who ‘ had a bit of heart for his tenants.’ When young, he had told his mother he meant to hold one of Mr. Woodd’s farms, and she laughed at him, but he did it. With him was an older man, strong and grey, with clear, child-like eyes, in long yellowish coat and large hat with a red cord round it. He was a mole-catcher from near Penygent. He caught moles for the district, and carried news and some knowledge of land and stock. Even mole-catching is not the trade it once was. A silent, thoughtful, understanding being, with surly confidence in the art of mole-catching, but otherwise diffident. We left them searching out a well-known offender.”

Only a short time after this (in September, 1888), I happened in my wanderings to meet again a man as interesting as these, and far more famous. After reading the chapter in Ruskin’s “ *Præterita* ” called “ *L’Hotel du Mont Blanc*,” I went to Sallanches in the French Alps, and in the old Belle Vue Inn there I was horribly disturbed every morning at first light by someone in the next room creaking about with noisy boots. As there was an attendant or valet who dined with us in the evening, I took my plaguey neighbour for a lord, perhaps insane, and cursed him at random, though the view of all the Mont Blanc range just before dawn was always of amazing beauty when one got up to see it. One day, after a splendid walk through St. Gervais up the Col de Voza and back, I was talking to “ the keeper ” at dinner as usual when he surprised me by saying that fish

could live in the Arve because the deposit was only clean and healthy slate or lime, though the water looked so thick. I went on to deplore the corrupted rivers of Yorkshire and the Lowlands, and so came to Carlyle's country. Whereupon "the keeper" told me he had held Carlyle's cup while he drank tea, so feeble had the old man become, and then I said, "I'm afraid Ruskin will be the next to go." "I never knew him so well for years," the amazing "keeper" replied: "Haven't you seen him?" "Very often in old days," I said. "I mean here—now," he answered; "I am with him here." So my crazy lord was Ruskin himself, and in the morning when awakened by those creaking boots, I did not say one single damn. Next day that trusty servant, Baxter, brought an invitation for Margaret Nevinson and myself, and I wrote that evening:

"He came to meet us with words of thanks, a little bit *empressés*; I mean there was something almost religiously solemn in his thanks (for a lot of cyclamen), as though we were in church or at a deathbed—eyes turned down and voice subdued (no doubt in the effort to conceal boredom). But he recovered himself at once, and I noticed it again only for a moment as we came away. He looked much older than in Oxford ten years ago. (A minute description of his appearance follows.) We were looking across the fertile valley to the red precipices of Varens, which rose sheer opposite the window, and he said there was no place like Sallanches for beauty and sublimity combined. 'And yet,' I said, 'hardly a soul comes here to stay.' 'Very few people have souls,' he answered, 'and those that have are generally ambitious and want to climb up heights. Hardly anyone cares about beauty. If people did, they wouldn't build London or pull down Paris.'

"He paused, and as though to correct exaggeration, then went on: 'There are, of course, good people still, but they spend all their time in undoing the harm that the others have done. They go nursing, or reforming the East End, or teaching *crétins*, while the healthy and hopeful are neglected. The other day there was a woman singing here about the street with a lovely voice. But her only song was all about 'Liberté, Liberté,' and that sort of thing. I asked her what



VILLAGE OF ST. MARTIN, OPPOSITE SALLANCHES

SEE RUSKIN'S "PRÆTERITA"

*From a Drawing by the Author, 1888*





she knew of Liberty and tried to get her to sing some of the other songs in the book she was selling, such as 'La Rosière,' but I found she did not know any, and could not read.

"I said something about the melancholy of the mountain people. 'Yes,' he answered, 'the people here are gloomy and no wonder. They are neglected and left to themselves, and not allowed to see or hear anything. There are no gentry in the country; they have all swarmed into the towns to make money. The peasants have a very hard time, especially in such seasons as this, and now there is so much disease among the vines.' He became a little depressed, and continued in tones more subdued and regretful: 'The country does not grow what it used to. The whole climate' (I think he meant of Europe) 'is becoming damper, and I only wish God would provide us with better means of resisting it. The snow on Mont Blanc is not so deep as it used to be. It comes lower down the sides, but is thin, and the top is growing bare.'

" 'Yesterday,' he continued more cheerfully, 'we were on the road out there (towards Combloux and Megève) and saw the great moraine that once stretched from Mont Blanc to Geneva and the Jura. As it receded, it left the greatest blocks just there, by the Combloux road. We measured some.' He appealed to Detmar Blow, the architect, who was with him, for the exact sizes, which were given. He then described the vegetation—'very rich, as it always is on granite'—and went on to speak of various friends, such as Sydney Cockerell—a very remarkable young man, so sweet and thoughtful, and of high scientific power too. If he had been here, he would have filled the whole place with shells by now.'

" 'Yes,' he said again, as though aroused from despondency by the thought of friends. 'There are still good people in the world, though they generally overwork—or overwalk themselves. So yesterday you walked up to the Col de Voza and back—a long way. I wish I could walk as far now. By walking you can get to places where no carriage or mule can take you. That's the best of it.' "

He went on to speak of St. Martin (the little village just across the beautiful old bridge over the Arve, where that Hotel du Mont Blanc had been)—"not much changed since his boyhood; even the inn capable of repair"—and of

various other subjects. We took our leave, and in the afternoon we saw the slight and stooping figure enter a carriage and drive across to St. Martin so as to follow the old and beautiful road to Chamonix, where, a day or two later, he wrote the Epilogue to the final edition of "Modern Painters." Those days were to be the last of full life for him, though he remained in the world nearly twelve years longer, nominally alive.

I had intended here to quote my account of a walk to Coniston and Brantwood (of which I wrote a minute description, though I was too shy to go and call). It was less than two years later (July, 1890), but Ruskin's mind had already faded almost out. That day I had climbed Langdale Pike and had walked by the lovely, rich pass into Coniston, where the water was calm and sunny as an Italian lake—"half polished blue, half rippling white." But perhaps there is greater interest in the sheep-shearing I had witnessed the day before, when I walked from Wastdale up Scafell, and then by the Sty-head pass over into Seathwaite, and back up the long Strath and over the Stake pass into Langdale :

"At Seathwaite watched an old farmer and his two sons shearing sheep—a miraculous process. Catch your sheep in your arms, sit astride the broad seat, with the sheep held down on its back in front of you, its head under your left arm for choice. Make an incision underneath, between the front legs, and cut away all the under wool to the tail, clearing the tail with great care. Tie the four legs all together with a rope ; turn the sheep over, and clip its back in the same way. The whole fleece comes away at last in one piece, the sheep escaping from it like a nice white ghost from its coil. A good worker will shear 100 sheep a day, but they have to be driven in dry or the wool doesn't keep. The shepherds had gone through the farce of plunging the sheep in the stream three weeks ago. This man owned 2000 sheep of the Herdwick breed. He sells the wool at Kendal, and gets about 6½d. a lb. for it. He used to get nearly a shilling, but the American tariff has gone up and the price has to be kept low ; for nearly all the wool goes to America. (Why do

we import from Australia and export to America ?) A fleece weighs from 4 lb. to 6 lb. He said they very seldom cut the sheep, 'though whiles we do get a bit through !' He thought the sheep understood it better the second year, and were not so terrified. The dogs all stood looking on with a comical expression of wonder, amusement, and understanding."

At the end of this interlude, I showed the drawings I had made of the mountains to my father, who showed me the drawings he had made of the same mountains forty years before ; and in my diary I noted : " Before we know where we are, Richard (then ten months old) will be sending *his* views of Lake scenery to the Academy." Not bad as prophecy goes !

From among many similar records of delight I select only one more. It relates a run with the Huddersfield Workmen's Harriers and belongs to New Year, 1892, when already a new and happier way of life was just beginning for me :

" Up at Halifax at six in the dark, and compared our lot to the thousands of mill-hands who get up so every morning. Down twilit streets to station, the dawn just treading over the big eastern hill. Cold and fresh, with N.W. wind over frozen ground. Jolted by rail through a series of savage factory villages to Huddersfield, where the sun came glinting out through driving rain over Castle Hill. Thence to Holmfirth, where we found the harriers on their way, under charge of a queer little Whip, about five foot high, with a long green coat down to his heels and a black velvet cap. He collects the harriers from the various owners in the villages. After the hunt they all find their own way home, and the older dogs start early so as to avoid having the muzzle put on. The pack costs about £50 a year to maintain, the only expenses being the pay of the Whip and Huntsman during winter, and the licence. They go out three times a week in all weathers. It is managed entirely by workmen for themselves, and about twenty-five of them turned up at this meet—mill-hands, dyers, small farmers, labourers, butchers, etc., and a lot of boys. The pack has been going for more than a century, with varied fortune. We walked up the long Holm valley, scene of terrific slaughter in 1852. . . .



After waiting about in 'The Fleece' at Holm, we set out with some twenty hounds, and drew in vain in some steep spinneys by a stream, the dogs questing up and down with some skill, though scattered. Crossing the road again, we found in a field, and were off up a steep hill and across vast stone walls. The natives rush the walls without waiting to look for footing, and are over. Their running is fair, but not very remarkable. The hare was at last run into as she lay in a furrow, but was saved from the hounds by a boy who took her home, still 'wick.' But they say these hares always die of fright within a few hours.

"We chased about the fields for some time longer, and then went up the hill, a terrific wind blowing, with smashing rain. Failed of scent, and came in to rest and drink beer. An old hero, aged seventy-five, who had hunted with all the packs for sixty years and still was game, sang one of his own songs—an epic of a run through seven townships in 1861 :

*'By Barnham Common then they went,  
And did their work most excellent ;  
And of the men not one did fail  
As long as dog could wag a tail.'*

And so on. It was howled out to a sing-song of his own, the last two lines being repeated in chorus. After lunch we had a very fine run, and failed to kill. The men complimented Brooke on my running—a relic of Shrewsbury days."

These interludes of heaven, however brief, ought to have shed a radiance longer than they did. As my train approached the suburbs again, I would shut my eyes, but the dyspepsia of disgust and frustration penetrated through blindness. I used to repeat to myself the saying of my wise friend, Goethe : "*Wer Wein pressen kann, soll kienen Essig brauen.*" But all in vain ; for what wine was there that I could make ?

## CHAPTER VIII

### PURGATION

*“ Lo Duca ed io per quel cammino ascoso  
Entrammo a ritornar nel chiaro mondo :  
E senza cura aver d' alcun riposo  
Salimmo suso, ei primo ed io secondo,  
Tanto ch' io vidi delle cose belle  
Che porta il ciel, per un pertugio tondo,  
E quindi uscimmo a riveder le stelle.”*

“ Inferno,” XXXIV, 133-9.

THE next few years—say from the last month of 1891 to the third month of 1897—were for me, as for so many people in that variegated age of English life, a period of strangely vivid interests and strangely diverse pursuits. We were simultaneously, and almost equally, attracted by the soldier, enthusiastic for the rebel, clamorous for the poor, and devoted to the beautiful. Some of us were moved most by one of these incitements, some by another ; but many, like myself, were moved by all four together, and we recognised no contradiction in the objects of our admiration or desire. The apparent contradictions were reconciled in a renewed passion—a glowing intensity—of life as we issued from the rather chilly rationalism and moralising of former years. People who do not remember that remarkable age, or who never lived in its centre, easily dismiss the 'ninties as “decadent” ; and there was, certainly, a small set which cultivated Decadence as an alluring pose. Decadence implies the weariness that comes of satiety, especially of satiety in sensual pleasures, and some enjoy being regarded as the languorous victims of excessive sensual experiences. Satiety drives to the exploration of untried emotions, no

matter how perverse, and it was natural for the satiated, in Walter Pater's words, "to catch at any exquisite passion, or any contribution to knowledge that seemed by a lifted horizon to set the spirit free for a moment, or any stirring of the senses, strange dyes, strange colours, and curious odours, or work of the artist's hands, or the face of one's friend." Since our time is short, and the number of our pulses counted, let us clutch the joy of the moment—the "monochronos hedoné"—and for the moment feel again a new thrill, reviving the excitement which habit had glutted to stupefaction. If that search was vain, other dark avenues must be drawn by the questing hounds of desire; for there are many coverts accessible to man, and in one or other of them the new ecstasy must surely lurk.

That was the spirit of Decadence, as we followed or laughed at it in the early 'nineties. But it never spread very far, for it was possible only among well-to-do and literary classes, and most people then, as always, were either poor or busy or both. For the poor or the busy the ordinary pleasures of mankind suffice when they can get them, nor are their pleasures ever likely to be so habitual as to satiate. Most of us, though either poor or busy or both, felt, indeed, an amused interest in the Decadents, and were much moved by the beauty of their finest art in words and illustration. Most of us deplored and indignantly condemned the atrocious fate of Oscar Wilde, for whom many, like myself, would gladly have offered bail, if, like Stewart Headlam, we could have raised the £1,000 demanded. But Decadence fell with Wilde in the very middle of the 'nineties (April, 1895) and both before and after the hideous event, we regarded our life in that epoch rather as a Renaissance than as a Decadence. To us it was a time of adventure and life renewed. Those years of infinitely varied experiment were illuminated for us by all manner of strange and wandering lights, but by some that were steadfast though old, and by some steadfast though new—all manner of wandering lights, comets, shooting meteors, fire-flies, will-o'-the-wisps, and

churchyard candles—but new stars also and the constellations to which Ulysses set his helm. The beautiful phenomena of heaven, like Dante ascending out of Hell's darkness by hidden ways, I too perceived as through a rounded aperture. Nor did my Guide and I take any rest, but climbed up together, my Guide first and I second, until we came out into the upper world whence I could see the stars again.

Besides the presence of a Guide, my upward path was cleared and lightened by freedom from teaching, and, except in military drill (about which no doubt is possible) and in occasional political or literary lectures (to which no one was obliged to listen), I have never done any teaching since. I was enabled to shake this hampering burden off chiefly through the friendship of Captain John Sinclair, late of the 5th Lancers (afterwards Lord Pentland and Governor of Madras), who had conceived the idea of the London Playing Fields Committee for providing cricket, tennis, and football grounds among clubs which could just afford the bare cost of upkeep. He had me appointed secretary, Edward Chandos Leigh, the Speaker's Counsel, being chairman, and for about six years I managed the society with some success. With the help of excellent district sub-committees, we laid out a large number of grounds at all the points of London's compass, and maintained them at very small cost, beyond my salary of £100 a year. A great deal of my work consisted in keeping the accounts and addressing envelopes. That was not the kind of writing I sometimes thought myself best fitted for, but at the worst it was better than my teaching. Adrift in Central Africa, one fevered missionary said to his fevered and complaining comrade, "Cheer up, mate! It's better than Doubleyou Brothers!"

And I certainly did learn a good deal. I learnt what a large number of educated and busy Englishmen there are who give up time to sit on committees and control societies in which they have no interest beyond their personal liking for the subjects, or their sense of social obligation. I learnt



how much pleasanter and more useful it is to work with educated and sensitive men than with the dull and insensate, and it has since seemed to me possible that the word "gentleman" may have a distinct meaning and value; even, alas! as something different from "Nature's gentleman." For among people of the other kind, the ill-manners, suspicions, and utter refusal to believe that anyone would not make money out of a public society if he possibly could, were a perpetual hindrance and irritation. That suspicious and insensitive temper has, I think, been the weakness hitherto in many "democratic" movements, partly because sixpence has, unhappily, meant so much more to the members than it would to people of higher education and probably greater possessions. My experience on one or two occasions taught me to sympathise very keenly with the suffering of all who serve the vulgar, and of anyone who lies at their mercy. I also learnt a good deal about cart horses, kinds of soil and grass, the rent and purchase of freehold, the rustic speech of groundmen and the art of land-surveying, so that at sight I could judge acreage almost to the yard. And it pleased me to go cycling about to every quarter of London, looking after the grounds, conciliating irritated claimants, and watching the young barbarians all at play. I met with some opposition, it is true, especially from moralists who objected to open spaces of every kind, because, as a notable sportsman and great landowner told me, "Immorality was all very well in its proper place—in its proper place—but not upon public commons." But as a whole the sporting, cricketing, and idle classes stood by us, and I became acquainted with a good many of them, as with W. G. Grace, who sometimes put his valuable signature to letters I had composed. After one of my meetings with him (June 4, 1894) I wrote :

"W. G. came in—solid, vast, enormous in the shoulders, ruddy and clear-skinned; thick, black beard just touched with grey; he is just beginning to swell too much in the wrong place; clear eyes, rather oblique like a Chinaman's,

and high cheekbones ; a rough good-tempered manner ; a fine specimen of man, and all his powers spent on knocking balls about ! What might he not have done a thousand years ago ! ”

The work was supposed to take only half my time, but it is a safe precept never to accept a half-time job, for it is impossible to regulate a day's work by halves. Still I secured a good deal of leisure, and very timidly began writing sketches and articles for the fine and confused assortment of Bunting's "Contemporary Review" (moderate Liberal), the "St. James's Gazette" (immoderate Tory), and "Freedom" (immoderate Communist Anarchist, unpaid). With punctual energy I continued to drill my Cadet Company near Shadwell Basin, and a little account of one of our field-days at Aldershot, which appeared in the "St. James's Gazette," somehow attracted the attention of J. W. Arrowsmith, the Bristol publisher, who wrote asking if I could not do him a bookful of similar sketches. My acquaintance with East End life was then many years old, but I began increasing it in various ways. In the first place, I went hopping with the crowd at Marden in Kent, and wallowed about in the slough of their encampments ; for it was a wet season and the pickers were filthy and ragged. The swarming children were always dressed in their elders' clothes, cut down anyhow and extended to double service—a skirt serving both as bodice and skirt, and trousers as coat besides. Through the garments of all the pickers the dirty skin kept peering out in the most unusual places, and the invariable smell of dirty poverty, mingled with the pungent smell of withering hops, pervaded the whole gardens. The farm I worked on was said to have yielded £35,000 the year before, hops selling in the Borough at £15 a pocket (about 10 bushels). An industrious family of man, wife, and children would take home about £5 to £7 in the end, working under very definite regulations, and never picking during rain or the funeral of a picker. Many fine experiences I had, but I will mention only one typical extract from my

diary, omitting a few phrases to spare the feelings of the printers :

“The greed for the good plants is vicious, and if a woman sees her neighbour is beating her, she is ready for murder. One old professional woman tramp, who had walked up from Plymouth and looked like tanned leather, worked away without a word. But an Irish woman, graceful still, with a drunken lout of a husband, was indeed eloquent. Her appeals to the ‘measurer’ to grant her short baskets ; her promises of the most intimate embraces and enraptured endearments ; her cry of ‘Mary ! That’s an onmerciful wonn,’ and her final prayer to Jesus that, as the measurer was probably a bastard, he might not have a chance of the highest sensual enjoyment for a month—all shameless. The man was quite stolidly indifferent, and put her down 14 instead of the 18 which she demanded. Whereupon she resolved to work no more, but was soon languidly at it again, casting her primeval wit over the whole field.”

After the ritual race for the last pole, and the burning in effigy of the most unpopular picker, we all went home to “good old London,” and in carrying their stuff for a family with an ailing child I caught scarlet fever. That kept me in London Fever Hospital for many merry weeks, whence I emerged with hair over my shoulders like an old-fashioned German musician’s, and a sprained ankle from playing football with a roll of socks in an empty ward.

For a time also I lodged in Arbour Square off the Commercial Road, and often attended the neighbouring Thames Police Court, then presided over by John Dickinson, an excellent Magistrate, before whom I had the honour in Bow Street of being brought up at a later period of his career, when I received a very deserving lecture, and gave him a still better one in return. Sometimes, too, I went round with the rent-collectors ; once at least with Augusta Butcher, who afterwards married and was drowned with her husband in the Wye. In 1893 she was a woman of singular beauty—“like a lovely autumn day,” I wrote, “all the wild grace of Ireland in her crown of hair and red-brown

eyes." She had completely won the heart of the tenants, and they paid their rents as though they were bringing free gifts of frankincense and myrrh. The rooms in Catharine Buildings, where she collected, then ran from 5s. a week for two, or 2s. 9d. for one large, down to 1s. 6d. for one small. A general description of the interiors that I wrote at the time, probably holds good still; certainly it held good up to the war:

"The rooms of nearly all the tenants were decorated, if not neat—much over-decorated, in fact, with pictures on glass, cuttings from almanacs, Biblical scenes, portraits (I noticed the Socialist, who 'didn't think much of religion, being more of a politician,' had Bible scenes and a huge picture of the Prince of Wales over his bed), pictures of Robert Emmet dressed like Napoleon, waving his sword towards a river and mountain, no one else in sight; also of Emmet on trial, in tight white breeches, appealing to heaven; endless china and glass of the tawdry kind; statuettes, images, shells, and woolwork; nearly every room overloaded with such things in the passion for beauty or respectability. Dinner going on in some rooms; badly mashed potatoes, brown cabbage or sprouts; odd bits of meat, generally cold; bread, and either beer, or more often tea. The beds are the saddest and worst part of the rooms."

About the same time (1893) I began a pleasant habit of cruising down the Thames and up the Medway to Rochester, or around the Thames estuary, till my knowledge of those waters was intimate and peculiar. Once or twice I rowed down in an outriggered four, an exciting voyage when many steamers were raising storms on the water. Sometimes I sailed with an Irish friend who kept a little boat just big enough for two, somewhere near Queenborough. But I liked best to board a great sailing barge from Wapping Old Stairs and go quietly down with the tide, tying up for the night off Gravesend, and making Rochester in the morning. Perhaps I was the first to give the touch of romance to those beautiful red-sailed barges. For my story, "The St. George of Rochester," was written in 1893, and it must have been romantic, for the most beautiful of women said to one of the



plainest, "We ought to be very grateful to Mr. Nevinson for showing us what to do when we get into a scrape"; and the beautiful heroine of the barge certainly had got into a scrape! But, romance apart, the life on those barges was to me one of intense interest, mainly for the simple character of the men, and the exact routine of their essential work. Those beautiful craft are sure to become extinct soon, and so I add a description of the one I first went sailing in:

"From Wapping Old Stairs, I rowed up to the Pool and boarded the 'Surrey,' a fine top-sail barge—no 'stumpy,' i.e. without topsail—hailing from Rochester but belonging to Maidstone, and trading once a week from there to West Kent Wharf, which she leaves every Saturday, taking about twenty-four hours on the journey, and the rest of the time loading and unloading. She brings down stores of provisions, groceries, etc., up to eighty-five tons, for the whole district round Maidstone. The owner has two or three similar barges, and they pay him better than rail or steam. Each barge has a captain and two men. The men get twenty-seven shillings a week each, the skipper probably about forty-five shillings; all furniture and bedding found. Some men work by the freight, getting a proportion of the money made. This barge takes no up-freight, except perhaps hops, the work being 'very urgent, almost urgent enough for steamers, as is the most urgentest things there is.' She always sails on the top of the tide, day or night, summer or winter; nothing stops her but fog. She can beat up against wind close-hauled by letting the lee-boards down on each side. The sails have no gaffs, but the mainsail has a sprit run across it. The topsail is triangular. The mizzen turns with the rudder, and helps to bring the barge round on a tack. The foresail was too heavy for a light wind, but the white spinnaker or balloon jib so light and airy that it catches every breath of draught (the regular word for breeze or wind). The lower ends of the main and fore-sails are fastened to rings which run across deck on arches of wood—'the main and fore horses.' The anchor hangs over the bow, its cable kept in gear by an iron-bound hole or 'david.' There is a similar iron-bound hole passing through the deck for ropes, etc., called the hawse-pipe.

"Fore and aft is a cabin with fireplace and berths, shut up

in cupboards, and all manner of neat contrivances of drawers, hatches, seats, rope-end brushes, and larders. Each cabin has two berths. The chimney over the cabin is covered with a wooden imitation carefully painted to look like little bricks. After tea the whole barge is washed and swilled for cleanliness and to prevent the boards parting in the dry. Barges seldom sink or capsize, but are sometimes run down by steamers. Wrecks are marked by green flags. The skipper was an honest, very sober, and melancholic man of fifty, with largish grey eyes, a good nose, and the inevitable tuft of beard ; all the rest clean-shaved. Had been on the water all his life, sometimes sailing to Ipswich and even to Dover, but had never been anywhere else. Had begotten seventeen children, and buried twelve. One sharp boy of eight was on board, doing a ‘ voyage ’ for his holiday.

“ At 4.30 we had tea in the cabin—tea and thick bread and butter, choice of cucumber or tinned salmon, cheese, bacon, and cold beef—mostly in my honour. The boy had cheese, ‘ himself ’ cucumber. The crew went down to tea directly we had finished—a man of about thirty-five, rather blind from early fever—carrings and short beard—a good waterman and real humorist ; an excellent boy of nineteen, brown-eyed, with long black lashes, a healthy, cheerful face, turned-up nose, and the happiest laugh ; born at Sittingbourne, father on the water for thirty years, but now out of work through an accident. Starting about 1.30 we made Gravesend about 6.30 with a fair draught most of the time, passing all other barges on the way.”

Supplied with a knowledge of East End life gradually absorbed through many years, I wrote the book of East London stories called “ Neighbours of Ours.” Arrowsmith kept it hanging about for eleven months before publication (January, 1895), thus allowing Arthur Morrison’s “ Mean Streets,” treating of similar subjects, to beat us by a neck, with the result that mine was praised, and his was bought. Still mine had the kind of success I least expected ; for though most of the stories are comedies, thought “ rather daring ” in those days for subject and language, they were heartily welcomed by people of serious knowledge, such as Samuel Barnett, Octavia Hill, Ernest Aves, and Charles

Gore, afterwards Bishop of Birmingham and of Oxford, who actually invited me to his "evenings" in Westminster on the strength of them. For many years, too, the book was recommended, and perhaps still is, to the students at the London School of Economics, a proud and startling distinction. But perhaps the criticism that pleased me most came from a Sister in a hospital where I went to recover a copy lent to one of the patients. Sniffing as at an evil odour, she remarked that she remembered seeing it about—"a very *common* sort of book. It seemed to me *very* peculiar. I asked who on earth such a thing *could* belong to," and so on. She was a Sister at Bedlam, and I have long feared that madness is catching.

Equally significant, and leading to further result, was the approval of William Robertson Nicoll, then well known as editor of the "British Weekly," and "The Bookman"; also as "Claudius Clear," "A Man of Kent," and perhaps other pseudonyms. He had lately "discovered" Barrie, Ian Maclaren, Jane Barlow, and Crockett, and perhaps he was mistaken enough to suppose that in me he had discovered a similarly lucrative treasure. At first he was flattering beyond bounds; said he found in me the "heart" and "faith" that people liked; urged me not to rein in my feelings, but just for this once, if I would write for him, "to wallow in the pathetic"; above all to be "tender" and end on a note of rest. I told him it was all in vain; that I had no faith and little heart, and could never be tender. Yet even after my Staffordshire stories had begun to appear in the "British Weekly," with disastrous effect upon its readers, he kindly continued to urge me to change my nature, promising that I should write the most popular book of the time if only I would follow his advice and eschew "the cruel harshness which leaves the mind gloomy and our aspect of mankind worse than before." He declared that one of the stories ("An Undesired Victory"), which I had thought almost sentimentally sweet and even religious, had reminded him only of "Germinal" and had most grievously

offended his readers. So it went on for a time, till at last his disapproval and the danger to the paper became so emphatic that we parted with mutual consent, and greater esteem on my side than on his. For he told me my last story had created horrible disturbance, and had proved to him that I had taken my brutal and cynical line and would never leave it, whereas "we agree to drop that ugly side of life now, or to keep it only for death-bed scenes." Upon which obscure utterance I withdrew to meditate. And my chief consolation for the inevitable rupture has been that a stranger once forwarded to me a letter from a parson long resident in the Black Country, saying that he always kept my collection of these stories, called "In the Valley of Tophet," by his side, because they alone had introduced the light of human love and sweetness into that abandoned region. After all, it is as good a reward as writing the most popular book of the time, though not so lucrative either to myself or a publisher.

I was drawn to the Black Country chiefly by repulsion, for one always likes to see things at their worst, and I had long known the Black Country as the deadliest region of England. In the same spirit, I had the previous year (1894), visited the Workhouse Schools around London so as to realise what education at its worst might be, and there certainly I saw the system of charitable State Institutions operating as one might expect it to operate. At least, I hope that nothing which a State does could be worse. But to the Black Country I was also drawn by friendship with a Viennese Anarchist, Karl Henze, an excellent potter and worker in terra cotta reduced by almost complete blindness to keeping a public house, which some of us bought for him at Rowley Regis. Like most political exiles, he was a man of considerable knowledge, though his revolutionary enthusiasm had been mitigated by poverty and helplessness. Later on, a blind man's usual troubles broke up the family, and I knew him many years afterwards straying about the Bradford region to earn pence as a commission-agent for tea. He was still kept decent by a daughter and our old clothes, but then he



disappeared. With him I wandered far and wide through the linked-up villages and small towns lying in hideous wretchedness between Birmingham and Wolverhampton, where "industry" has made a desolation and called it wealth.

I lodged in an absolutely bare room with an old woman who made nails all day at her little stiddy for a "fogger" at Cradley (pronounced Craidley) Heath, and was chiefly paid in miserable "Tommy-truck" from his shop, he refusing to supply the iron rods unless she accepted the stuff. Associating day and night with nail-workers, iron-workers, and coal-miners, I learnt a good deal about their habits, and I found their view of life was not a cheering view. It provided little of that tenderness and few of those moments of rest which Robertson Nicoll required for his soothing stories. I already knew the Sunderland coal-pits, and the conditions of life in the neighbouring villages there. But in the Black Country the pits were worse organised, and the conditions above ground more wretched. In the "thick coal" of South Staffordshire the miners' work is easier because the galleries are less narrow. But falls are more dangerous, and unless large and frequent "pillars" are left standing for support, the surface subsides, so that in some villages all the houses are askew, and they often fall into ruin, to the great disturbance of family life. In those days the whole district was neglected and appeared to be decaying. The great pottery works, it is true, were doing full time. The chain-makers of Cradley Heath were hammering the huge links for anchor chains, women toiling at the work in scanty covering. But the nail-makers were threatened by the machine-made nail; one great iron foundry was closed during that year (1895), and seven hundred hands were thrown out; and the miners had no power of union like the miners I had known in the North. Poverty, uncertainty, and depression lay upon the district, heavy and dull as its own smoke. Still a boozy cheerfulness recurred at the "Wakes," and the men found relaxation in whippet-racing,

pigeon-flying, and leaping with weights—to me a marvellous performance ; for a man swinging an iron weight like a dumb-bell in each hand would take two short leaps first, without any run, and then a long leap, dropping the weights and clearing as many as eight kitchen chairs set in a row. Religion also added a variety, and sometimes a consolation, as to this chain-making girl :

“ At Cradley Heath I went through a workshop where girls and men were making chains—a lamentable sight. The girls are said to be stripped to the waist in summer, but that appears doubtful. Climbed a hill by the ugly brick church, and got a view far over the whole district, and away to Lye and Stourbridge, and so to Bewdley and the Severn, which is a Land of Beulah to these people. Coming down I watched a girl working alone at a chain in her little forge. She was singing a hymn, and told me she never felt lonely, ‘ having God with her.’ Told me all about her work and tools—all but what money she made. She kept her mother, and thought the single were better off than the married. The house was their own, but mortgaged.

Perhaps I could have created a pious story about such a girl that would have cloyed even the readers of the “ British Weekly ” with its tender sentiment. But she was a rare example, and no comfortable people like to hear the truth about the working classes. Even the allurements of indecency will hardly entice them, as Zola found.

To myself, on the contrary, though I naturally belonged to the comfortable classes, the attraction of repulsion, as I have called it, was very strong, and during those years my shamed sympathy with working people became an irresistible torment, so that I could hardly endure to live in the ordinary comfort of my surroundings. Many of us felt the same. To me, probably the increasing sympathy came from increasing knowledge, for there is truth in the old song, “ He’s a good ’un when you know him, but you’ve got to know him first.” And there is truth in a saying I took from Scott Holland when he was preaching on marriage in

St. Edmund's, Lombard Street (March 12, 1894) : " Because we love one entirely, we love others not less but more. Then only we find how lovable a thing man is." Burton in his " Anatomy " recommends a decapitated frog dried and pounded fine as a sovereign cure for love, but, though desperately in love, I never tried it ; perhaps fortunately, for I found my disgust at London's population gradually transformed into a humorous affection, which has grown stronger ever since. " The Workers are always right ! " and " The Workers, right or wrong ! " which I proclaimed as maxims amid general disapproval during the great coal-strike of 1893, have remained for me as useful guides, during all the subsequent controversies, strikes, and social disturbances. For however wrong the workers may be, they cannot possibly be so wrong as the wasters, the owners, or the " people of independent means." After all, my maxims are only simpler forms of Teufelsdröckh's toast : " 'The Cause of the Poor, in God's Name and the Devil's ! ' "

It was partly this increasing knowledge of the working people, partly a deep and lasting friendship with a very remarkable member of the Anarchist group, but chiefly my abhorrence of the State and all its detestable enormities, that made me intimate with the Anarchists during those years. Among comfortable people there was then the same kind of panic about Anarchists as there is now about Bolsheviks, though no resemblance in their doctrines can be found. For Bolsheviks follow the Marxian prescription of a dictatorial State, and it was exactly against the Marxian State that the Anarchists revolted. But Anarchists, like Bolsheviks, terrified Capital, and were vaguely connected with Russia. Every now and then a panic was stimulated by some enlivening scare—a man found shattered by his own bomb in Greenwich Park, or the discovery of an explosive factory in Staffordshire. Our Government was supposed to have allured certain worms slimily crawling towards Hell to act as provocative agents, and, judging from my subsequent acquaintance with Governments, I think that suspicion was

probably justified. Anyhow, like every dangerous cause, Anarchist Communism won enthusiastic adherents, and they met in a cellar in Windmill Street, off Tottenham Court Road. The Club was called "The Autonomy."

Hard by, in Fitzroy Street, the party had started a school, and at their request I endeavoured to instruct the little Anarchists in the elements of drill and orderly behaviour. It was a difficult task, for nearly all the children were Russians, Poles, or Italians, and, perhaps in accordance with the parents' creed, the elements of orderly behaviour had been omitted from their education. But still I made considerable progress, for most children like doing the same thing side by side. And it was an evidence of progress that once, after their beautiful and loving teacher had been working out a sum for them on the black board, she turned round to face nothing but row upon row of bare or booted feet upon the desks, where only heads should have been. The little Anarchists at a given signal, as on Company parade, had adopted this unusual attitude with military precision, and I saw that my labour had not been in vain.

In the Party I also formed a friendship lasting for many years with two remarkable people: Louise Michel and Peter Kropotkin. "The Red Virgin" was conspicuous at nearly all the meetings—conspicuous in ancient black, always worn to commemorate her fellow Communards pitilessly slaughtered in Paris (1871) to glut the bloodthirst of the bourgeoisie, who, crowding around the slaughterhouses with jeers and laughter, stood to witness the executions in mass. Old black bonnet, shaped like the Salvation Army bonnet and flung anyhow on top of the wild and copious grey hair; old black shawl; long black dress; and, making one forget dress and age and all, the thin, white face, lined with mingled enthusiasm and humour; prominent nose and receding chin, high and receding forehead, and under it keen grey eyes, eagerly peering out upon the world with rage, humorous pity, and gentleness strangely combined. She always spoke in French, her quiet and



monotonous voice just rising and falling, sweet and low as the summer sea. "Ne cadenceez pas, monsieur, ne cadenceez pas !" she used constantly to say to me in her vain attempts to teach me her beautiful language ; but her own cadence was regular and inevitable as the waves. "I am growing old," she said at the beginning of one of her greatest speeches, "and as I grow old I learn to have patience." Patience, gentleness, and a humour exquisite in its laughter and irony were then the characteristics of a woman once regarded as a brand meet for the burning, if it did not first burn the world.

Her household, somewhere out in the Sydenham region, was a model of chaos—yelping dogs and shrieking cockatoos, a fattish and apparently comfortable French woman who was supposed to keep house ; a bare wooden table strewn with books, papers, lumps of bread, an onion or two, and half a bottle of wine, which had splashed its red around and was seemingly drunk without glasses. In the midst sat Louise, unperturbed by the *ménage*, or even by the menagerie, calm, gracious, hospitable, with eyes fixed on futurity, and mouth humorously smiling while it told of her own and her mother's adventures during the Commune, or of her efforts to instruct the children in the New Hebrides during her long years of exile there. But Wilfrid Blunt has given so exact a picture of the scene that I need not describe it further.<sup>1</sup>

Peter Kropotkin I met first at the Autonomy Club in 1891. Anarchists do not have a chairman, but when enough of us had assembled, a man stood up and began to speak. His pronunciation was peculiar until one grew accustomed to it. "Own " rhymed with "town," "law " was "low," and "the sluffter fields of Europe " became a kindly joke among us. On that occasion he started with the sentence, "Our first step must be the abolition of all low." I felt no exaggerated devotion to the law, but, as a first step, its abolition seemed to me rather a long jump. Without a

<sup>1</sup> Wilfrid Scawen Blunt : "My Diaries," Part I, pp. 6-8.

pause Kropotkin continued speaking, rapidly, but with the difficulty of a foreigner who has to translate rushing thoughts as he goes along. His purpose, as usual, was to expose the absurdity and brutality of State legislation and State control. His examples were drawn from the bureaucraeies of Russia and France ; for in those days, long before the war, bureaucracy had not yet bridled this country. And besides, though he naturally knew Russia best, he knew France well, since, at the behest of the Tsar, he had long been imprisoned at Clairvaux, and only lately released owing to the expostulations of writers and men of science throughout Europe.

He was then about fifty, but he looked more. The great dome of his head was already bald. His face was battered and crinkled into an india-rubber softness, partly due to loss of teeth through prison-scurvy. His unrestrained and bushy beard was touched with the white that was soon to overcome its reddish brown. But eternal youth suffused his speech and stature. His mind was always going full gallop, like a horse that sometimes stumbles in its eagerness. Behind his spectacles his grey eyes gleamed with invincible benevolence. Like Carlyle's hero, he seemed longing to take all mankind to his bosom and keep it warm. One felt that if any bureaucrat, or even the Tsar himself had come destitute and afflicted, he would have found shelter there. He would tell us that even a middle-class citizen who would not or could not work still had a right to live, and so we should feed him as we feed invalids. He preached revolution, but by revolution he did not mean "a catching off of heads" or battles in the streets, but a rapid abolition of obsolete institutions. He gave instances of the violence employed by all parties and Powers during the previous twenty years, but said that Anarchists had the sole right to talk of the sacredness of life, since they alone denied the right to take it.

And yet there lived a contradiction in the figure of the man, for there was nothing soft or tender about that. The broad shoulders, the deep chest, the erect carriage and

straight back revealed the military training of his youth. But for his head, you would have cried, "Behold, the Guardsman!"—a Guardsman like one of those troops of whom the Tsar Nicholas I, reviewing them on parade, exclaimed with a sigh of disappointment, "And yet they breathe!" "Man is a very complex being," as Kropotkin himself observes in his "Mutual Aid," and I was often amused, during my long acquaintance, by this admixture of the aristocrat and officer in a nature so strongly opposed in reason to rank and war. Unconsciously, he cherished in himself the leavings of his birth and training. He came of a lineage, as he sometimes told me, far more ancient and distinguished than the Románoff dynasty, and was brought up in a family owning men and women as their private property. He was trained in the Corps of Pages, in direct contact with Alexander II, the Liberator of the Serfs, and the ill-fated despot of later years. He joined a Cossack regiment and travelled far into the unknown regions of Eastern Siberia, exploring the Amur, and making scientific observations upon the mountain systems of Northern Asia. When he returned to St. Petersburg, he was already famous as a man of science. But he then joined the famous Tchaykovsky Circle, and his description of it should be inscribed on the walls of every similar movement :

"During these two years it was life under high pressure—that exuberance of life when one feels at every moment the full throbbing of all the fibres of the inner self, and when life is really worth living. I was in a family of men and women so closely united by their common object, and so broadly and delicately humane in their mutual relations, that I cannot now recall a single moment of even temporary friction marring the life of our circle. Those who have had any experience of political agitation will appreciate the value of this statement."<sup>1</sup>

Yes! We all appreciate the value of that statement. It fills me with greater wonder than any supernatural miracle

<sup>1</sup> Kropotkin's "Memoirs of a Revolutionist," Vol. II, p. 107.

possibly could. But a courageous, self-sacrificing, and joyful life of that kind inevitably led to prison and disaster in Russia as in many other States, and the fortress or the gallows ended the happiness of most who belonged to the Circle, though Tchaykovsky himself is still living as I write (1923).

Kropotkin's method of work was peculiar, and, to an orderly Englishman, embarrassing. During the appalling period of Russian reaction (it seemed appalling then, though we have since seen how readily other Governments can equal its horror)—during that ghastly persecution of all freedom's advocates under Nicholas II and Stolypin in 1908 and 1909, while Tolstoy was issuing his pamphlet, "I Cannot be Silent," Kropotkin was writing his book called "The Terror in Russia," and as I had been out during the abortive revolutions of 1905 and the two following years, he asked me to help him in getting the subject into order. Order was his difficulty. He knew so much, thought so much, felt so much, it seemed impossible for him to keep within limits. Writing at great speed, he poured out sheet after sheet of straggling manuscript. Then omissions occurred to him—dozens of omissions. With strange devices of flying lines, loops, brackets, and circles he struggled to get them in. He was constantly altering his arrangement, never sure in what sequence the statements or reflections ought to come. Loose leaves were scribbled over, and we had to tuck them into the manuscript as best we could.

Unaccustomed to work in that manner, I felt as though floundering in a bottomless bog upon an unlimited steppe. All appeared uncertainty, confusion, and chaos. But Kropotkin never for a moment lost his temper or his genial exuberance. I suppose his was the Russian way of doing things, for he never thought it in the least perplexing or strange, and in the end the chaos worked itself out, as definite and well-arranged as the starry heavens. No one reading that book could imagine what a turmoil of confusion it went through before it emerged perfectly clear and clean



and trim as it stands. I have often wondered whether his other well-ordered and comprehensible books passed through the same process of dishevelled undress.

I saw him last on his seventieth birthday in December, 1912. I had just come from the scene of the Balkan War, and we naturally talked of wars. He already expected the overwhelming disaster that was so soon to fall upon Europe, and when it came he certainly welcomed it. For I suppose he was the only rational man in the world who sincerely believed it was "a war to end war." His faith in humanity was inexhaustible, and he welcomed the Russian Revolution of March, 1917, with the same enthusiastic hope. Unhappily, he lived to see both these hopes frustrated. Perhaps he retained too fond a faith in the unity and fundamental goodness of mankind, as he expounded them in his "Mutual Aid." He never fully realised how incalculably lower than the angels we remain. But when I remember his sunshiny nature, his inextinguishable hopefulness, his loving kindness to all who came, and his regardless devotion to the one cause of the working people, I could easily forgive our Bishops and Clergy, our Lords of the Council, and all the Nobility, our Cabinet Ministers, Members of Parliament, and all who set themselves in authority over us, if they fell into similar errors.

An Anarchist of equal attraction and almost equal fame whom I began to know in those years was Edward Carpenter. It was not till a good deal later in life that I became intimate with that exquisite writer and lovable personality, whom I have since always met as one of my truest and most admired friends, though the intervals between our meetings have often been wide. I had known him before by sight, and, like all the youngish people of those days, I had been deeply stirred by his early books. But it was in October, 1896, that I heard him first. He was speaking at St. Martin's Town Hall upon new ideas in science, and a big crowd came to hear him, including Sydney Olivier, Henry Salt, Fred Evans, Mrs. N. F. Dryhurst, and almost the whole gang of our

rebellious intellectual leaders and their following. The description I wrote of him that evening needs little alteration to-day (1923) :

“ He is certainly a very beautiful and attractive person ; tall and slim and fairly straight ; loose hair, and beard just grizzled ; strong, dark eyebrows, dark eyes, straight nose, and thin cheeks of palish brown ; the whole face very like Carlyle at forty-five—a Carlyle fined down and ‘ cultured ’ ; he has one little trick of licking his thumb ; was dressed in loose greys, with a blue shirt, and tie in a large bow ; voice soft but strong enough without effort ; spoke from a few notes and went slowly ahead in almost perfect grammar ; and with apparent composure, only checked by an occasional flutter as of failing breath ; not many ‘ points,’ and hardly any laughter ; perhaps a conscious avoidance of such things. His main purpose was to show that Science, owing to its limitation, is apt to leave out many vital sides. The study of it should teach increased perception like that of savages ; it should be intellectual, but also dwell on the moral or emotional relations of the object to ourselves. The study of medicine, for instance, should not be of drugs, but of health, until the body becomes so pure as to be conscious of its internal states and changes, as certain Indians are.”

On that line he continued, and all were absorbed in listening to his quiet words. He was then most widely known for his poetic gospel, “ Towards Democracy,” but to me best known for his prose works, such as “ Civilisation : its Cause and Cure,” and his descriptions of his experiments in market-gardening and market-selling near Sheffield. Perhaps it was a result of his example that some of the “ Comrades ” started an Anarchist-Communist farm at Benton near Newcastle (about 18 acres at a rent of £60), which I sometimes visited and worked upon after my walks along Hadrian’s Wall from Carlisle to the Tyne. The most capable man on the farm, a Bohemian named Kapper, firmly believed it to be the starting-point of a great social and industrial revolution. On one of my visits I recorded a list of leeks, cabbages, rhubarb, celery, strawberries, roses, pansies, and mushrooms (supposed to be growing in the

glass houses) ; also in livestock about 100 chickens, 20 ducks, 3 cows, 6 goats, 2 horses, some rabbits, a dog, one woman, and three children. But I noted "All was very dirty and unkempt, ill-weeded and unorganised." And after another visit I added the significant remark, "Came away with impressions hopeful—especially if the families get separate cottages." That was, perhaps, the trouble—the Community was too communal. Every morning each man chose what bit of work, if any, he would like to do. But there was the temptation also to choose which woman he would like to love, and as one woman, and one only that I ever saw there, was in the least attractive—a red-haired, charming person in a pale blue dress—the Community broke up, sharing the fate of Troy.

To some it may seem strange that all this time I was working hard to acquire further military knowledge, was drilling my little Company with unfailing regularity, was attending the officers' training drills with the Grenadier and Coldstream Guards, was organising camps and supplies, diligently investigating the German Army's methods, and even attending their great Imperial manœuvres upon the left bank of the Rhine, following their drill, inspecting their barracks, and nearly causing international complications in my zeal to test their food. This labour was partly due to a vague intention of becoming a war correspondent, if ever I got a chance ; and with this object I also learnt riding in one of the London schools. But this military enthusiasm belonged to the spirit of the time, inspired partly by the writings of Rudyard Kipling, Stevenson, and Henley, but chiefly by ignorance of war. We were something like those young Athenians whom Thucydides describes as ignorant of war and therefore a-tiptoe with excitement at the prospect of it. I remember offending my Socialist and Anarchist friends one evening by declaring I should not care to live in a world in which there was no war. Well, we have had our bellyful now, and many millions have not lived, whether they cared to or not.

But it was not merely martial ardour that led me to the great change in life which I was then approaching. The change was at least equally due to what was one of the happiest events in an existence which, on the whole, has been happy—my first visit to Greece (1894). It came of my membership in the Toynbee Travellers Club, and for the first time I was able to join the others in an enterprise because Arrowsmith had given me £50 for “Neighbours of Ours,” so that for some three weeks of ecstasy I afforded about £30 out of that reward. There were thirty-one of us in the party—minor Civil Servants, Higher Board School teachers, one or two University men, like my excellent but sharply contrasted friends, Cyril Jackson and George Bruce ; a distinguished architect, C. Harrison Townsend, possessing special knowledge of Byzantine art ; James Britten, botanist and advocate of Roman Catholic Truth, and our guide and support, Thomas Okey, now Professor of Italian (the first Professor of Italian) in Cambridge. Perhaps he will forgive me, modest though he is, for copying some sentences I wrote on him at the time in my separate estimate of each among my companions, including the six women :

“Thomas Okey, aged about 37 ; basket-maker in White-chapel and king of men ; the general backbone of the whole expedition ; endlessly patient over unnoticed detail, sparing no pains, careless of his own pleasure, always busy with station masters, hotel keepers, agents, and other bores ; silent mostly, and never jesting ; never flustered or anxious or disturbed ; at the most critical moments, like Father Æneas, ‘Spem fronte serenat.’ What a Quartermaster-General the Army has lost in him ! He has deliberately renounced riches and devoted himself to the things that are more excellent ; has made himself almost perfect in at least three foreign languages and their literatures ; has a peculiar and exact knowledge of English, too ; has seen much and travelled far ; is full of quiet surprises, like his knowledge of the Anarchists in England and his sympathy with their cause ; keeps throughout all the same demure, unruffled face, reddish brown, with pure, light blue eyes—the face of a well-bred beagle or basset-hound.”



I used to say that the development of such a man justified the existence of Toynbee Hall, and I still think so. He was the natural chief of the party, though too much occupied with the happiness of others to enjoy much himself. On some his care may have been wasted, for they might just as well have been in Essex as in Greece, but most of us owed him a debt beyond estimate, and no one a greater debt than myself. I could hardly then believe that the land of Greece still existed. My first sight of it as we entered the amethyst Gulf of Corinth overwhelmed me with unequalled joy, and for the next three weeks I lived like one transported into joyful dreams. I knew nothing of modern Greece, her politics, her trade, or her population, and I cared nothing. I hardly observed that she was inhabited by living people, except when, as in Arcadia and upon the plains around Thebes, I found traces of the ancient Greek dress and manners. But to me the whole of the land—that most lovely land, so abundant in colour, so conformable in scale and free from monstrous and inhuman exaggeration of mountain or sea—was far more than any Paradise could be ; for every stone and clod of its brilliant surface was consecrated by the noblest memories in all the history of man. We reached Athens late at night, but I went straight, without a moment's doubt, through the new town and some crooked little streets right up to the foot of the great rock on which the Acropolis was dimly visible, hanging grey as a ghost against the stars. I clambered up the rough ground till I came to the steps of the Propylæa, but was stopped at its first arch by a great iron gate which I shook in vain. Inside, the temples stood silent and pale. Marvellously tall they looked in the darkness. A dog barked at me from some hut beside the Parthenon, and three or four owls kept screaming their lamentations. I wandered down along the south front of the rock by steep paths choked with a chaos of ruins, and at last came to a modern road, leading to the height overlooking the region of the ancient town from which now and again a melancholy singing issued.

In Athens we had the invaluable help of Ernest Gardner, at that time head of the English School of Archaeology, and many years later so familiar to me, when we were stationed together in Salonika during the Great War. If one has seen Athens, and known the least trace of her varied arts, one has touched perfection and the world can show no greater achievements of the human mind. But still to me there came perhaps an even higher joy in journeying, for the most part afoot, about the ancient country districts of Greece. One night, for instance, after a long day upon the Acropolis with Gardner, I started with George Bruce and three others in a ramshackle carriage (one of our rare extravagances), drove through Eleusis and turning to the right ascended the great passes of Kithaeron. All the way, in going downhill, the driver, a sun-baked ruffian, cursed at his horses with rapid oaths, but uphill he sang them a song such as horses like—a melancholy monotonous strain, something between a neigh and a chant, and the horses thought to themselves, “Now, that is really what we mean by music! That is what all music ought to be, if only we could catch the trick of it.”

At dawn we were walking up the highest pass of Kithaeron, the mountains on both sides dusted over with snow, the pines becoming sparse, but a little water in the defile. We had reached some way above the Palaio-Castro of Eleutheræ when morning just touched the clouds with rose. Soon we gained the exact spot where all behind was Attica, and in front stretched the mysterious Bocotian plain, haunted with ancient myths of the Sphinx, the dragon's teeth, the maddened mother swinging her son's head as a hunting trophy, and all the tragic Theban relationships. At one turn of the road it lay stretched below me—the field of little Plataea, the fat plain, red and green, the low line of rising ground just hiding Thebes, to which the road led like a white ribbon, and beyond Thebes, a gleam of white water, some long lake, or perhaps part of the Copaic marsh itself, broken by hills, and beyond that again, great unknown mountains,

some snow-covered, some perhaps in Euboea, some leading on the way to Thermopylae. Far away to the left, the great sister ranges of Parnassus and Helicon ; on the right the unlimited plain towards Delium, and somewhere near the lake, mystic old Orchomenos must have stood. The sky was grey, streaked with blue and rose. Descending by long sweeps of zigzag, we reached a large and prosperous village. The women in their Sunday dresses were already going to church. They wore deep, white linen skirts without flounce or petticoat over their bare, sandalled legs ; and above the skirts a peculiar coat of some stuff, soft and white, perhaps fine goat's hair, hanging quite straight away from the figure, and marked by broad, black bands down each side, almost sacerdotal, with mystic patterns on them. Their headdress was a handkerchief, generally white, neatly folded low down the forehead, and all round the back of the neck and head. Some wore the rather less beautiful frieze dress with brightly coloured rings all round the body and arms. But that was chiefly used for children. "At present," I added in my diary, "the country really seems quite free from the taint of England."

What people were not in church wandered far over the fields, gathering a peculiar root in pails. They pulled it up to a length of six or seven inches—a thinnish, white root at the end of a small bunch of lily-like leaves ; perhaps there was a largish bulb lower down. I supposed they used it for salad, and I wondered whether they gathered it every day or only as a Sunday luxury. I saw a little village close to the site of Plataea, two or three miles to our left, under Kithaeron. It was the escape of those brave Plataeans from the siege in the cold and wet early in the Peloponnesian war that first revealed to me the drama of history. Soon we crossed the Asopus, hardly to be called a brook in England, but the fullest stream I had met with in Greece ; and so we were in the midst of the old Theban battle, the course of which over that undulating plain might easily be followed. About eight o'clock we suddenly came upon

many-fountained Thebes itself. The present town covers the whole Kadmeia—not a rock, as I expected, but a very moderate mound, sloping to the north, and surrounded by gullies. Of the old walls and the Seven Gates hardly anything remains, but one could trace Ismenus and Dirce still. The distinctive features of the Kadmeia have probably been worn and flattened by its various fate. In the main street, nearly all the houses were of mud, and the shops of wood. As usual in a Greek village of those days, we were followed everywhere by the whole population, who stood at gaze while we had coffee and bread and honey in the *pantopoleion*. But within an hour we had to start again for our walk back to Eleusis—thirty-five miles at a forced pace—and we arrived there at 5.30 in the afternoon, having rested only beside Eleutherae, near a spring with a Turkish inscription. Here a huge eagle came quietly floating over us, head drawn back, wings slowly flapping, almost too broad for strength. The country was wild and untenanted; great unenclosed mountains, at least three ranges of them, mostly dotted with firs, but showing an occasional patch of field; many flocks tended by the nomads in their goatskins; hardly a drop of water. Having swum out from Eleusis towards Salamis, we returned in the evening to Athens after twenty-four hours of exquisite delight, free from the insensate obscurity of sleep.

Almost every minute of those few weeks was filled with similar delight, but one other walk I may notice especially, again copying my diary nearly word for word, and lingering over it only for the sake of the few who still worship the ancient gods. George Bruce was again my companion, strong as a young bull, though to me never so savage. Leaving Athens and passing through Corinth and the splendid mountain route between Sicyon territory and Argolis, we came to Mycenae, the Lion Gate, the tomb of Agamemnon, and all the wonder of the tragic scene where the doomed prophetess heard the wailing of murdered children upon the wind. Making a long circuit to visit some



little green tents I espied on a hill top, we found Charles Waldstein, then excavating the Heraeum, holy shrine of Argos. By his direction we plunged down through deep village roads haunted by packs of savage dogs, and, fording a river, arrived in Argos at night. Next day was Independence Day, and we wandered about the old theatre, where one could imagine the "Agamemnon" performed before an audience knowing every inch of the ground and every point of the story.

The steps of the theatre run very high back up the hillside, but the curve is shallow and short. We climbed to the ruined Venetian castle on the Larisa whence one sees Perseus' mountain, shaped like Ingleborough; the mountains of Argolis; Nauplia and its bay; brown-roofed Argos itself with its two horse-feeding plains; the mountain coastline of Laconia; and the vast ridges of Parthenion, Nestané, and other mountains that hedged in the blameless, black-earth Arcadians. Innumerable hawks screamed around, and three great eagles hung in the west, one coming close and then sailing away to the base of Nestané across the strong north-west wind, without a quiver of his broad oarage of wings.

By train we proceeded south across part of the Argive Plain and, turning suddenly west, wound slowly up a mountain gorge with a good deal of thick, brown water in it. So by a long curve we ascended to the broad, rich valley between Nestané and Parthenion, passing one beautiful village that hangs in terraces on its north side. Circling this by long loops, we climbed the very side of old Parthenion, where poor, neglected, comforting Pan was seen of the heroic runner, and, in fact, we circled almost round his mountain. The country is just such as would delight him—deep ravines all rocky and covered with olive, arbutus, and tiny myrtles, scrub of juniper and yellow broom, innumerable flowers springing between the stones, and sometimes large patches of grass. There are hardly any paths or roads except the main road from Argolis into Arcadia, but I saw

many flocks of goats and sheep with their shepherds—tall and dignified men in huge white cloaks of goat's hair with hoods, and red handkerchiefs knotted round their heads. Their life must be solitary and changeless—nothing to do or think of all day but the care of the flocks. Hardly a woman is seen anywhere in this region, but one little shepherdess ran barefoot over stones and thorns after our train as it climbed the steep, and seated herself quite comfortably on one of the buffers behind, till we reached the summit. Thence we could see the great mountains, the beginnings of Parnon and others which bar the way into Laconia. As we rounded the west side of Parthenion, we came into the great central tableland of Arcadia—a wet marshy plain, cold and grey and cheerless, that evening, but fat and fruitful with moisture, bearing wheat and maize and currants, and divided among prosperous villages; though, indeed, they had a bare and gaunt look, like a northern mining town. On the left, quite close to us, Tegea must have stood, defying Sparta. On the right, some way off, was Mantinea upon its battle plain, hidden by a great mountain of rock. So we reached Tripolis, and wandered far out to trace the road that creeps across the hills and down into the Eurotas Valley to Sparta—Sparta unvisited.

Next day, having old Tegea on the left, the road led over open country where the trees and bushes were all covered with brilliant blossom, white and red, and the peasants were coming in for the Tripolis market, each family like Abraham and his wife—all white and shining on their mules or ponies; the women in their robes and best ornaments, with head-dresses especially beautiful. Gradually ascending across a high tableland, we came to a pass, from the top of which we saw a great snowy mountain far away, due south. I asked a man its name, and the answer came clear and ready, "Ta-yg-e-tos!" That was a great moment of life.

The path led down to another rich plain, very swampy, with a shallow lake at one end; thence over a great mountain spur of Simberou, from which I thought I could discern the

Plain of Sparta itself. But a thunderstorm and drenching rain closed the view, and through a deluge of mud we struggled on for many hours towards Megalopolis, passing one mountain village, where a fine stock of dark women, dressed in noble rags of white robes, were selling snails by the sackful to a sharp and smiling youth. From Megalopolis a real road was then being slowly made past Karytaina, where a town stands nobly over the great gorge that turns the Alpheus west from north. A Frankish castle is piled high on its rock, which falls sheer on all sides but one. The town, with deep, shady verandahs, basks up the side of the rock almost to the castle's foot; it is like an Italian, mediæval place, with a look even of Spain, and the castle almost Arthurian in romance. The Alpheus, rushing under a beautiful old bridge at the entrance of the gorge was yellow that day, being in flood. The road was being continued to Andritsaina by long curves round the skirts of Mount Lycaon, a natural home of Pan, who protects the flocks from wolves.

At Andritsaina we sheltered with a burly brigand, who enjoyed a fair reputation owing to his clever, helpful wife. At first dawn, from my rug upon the floor, between the wooden bars of the balcony, I saw Erymanthus far off, in pure whitish grey against the heavy blues of night. It is a flat-topped rampart of snow, bastioned by peaks, and rising clear above the blue and purple hills that border the Alpheus. For the first part of that day we got ponies, and I found that mine was much cheered in his struggle up the almost impassable mountain tracks by long sprigs of some kind of Phlomis, very aromatic, and to him so delightful that when once I had given him a branch he would walk slowly past other specimens and turn his mouth round to meet my hand, like a child asking for cake. Going south, with a touch of west, after crossing a high pass, from which by turning round one could see Erymanthus again and Kyllene, where Aphrodite lived, we descended into a truly Arcadian country of steep wooded slopes and dells and profound valleys, much

broken by water, and all covered with shrubs and flowers and trees—the prickly oak, the pine, and various willows being chief. Those sweet-scented hills are the western edges of old Lycaon, and the haunt of Pan in his more amiable and cheerful moods, when he has ceased to act the wild wolf for the fun of making the harmless shepherd jump.<sup>1</sup>

So health-giving, indeed, was the place that more cultured people in Phigalia denied it to poor old Pan, and brought in the upstart Apollo, who has no trace of the hairy wild animals left on his symmetrical and well-washed body. And when we had to climb up again, winding over rocks and creeping round the slippery mud slopes at fountain-heads, it was a temple of Apollo the Healer to which we came, though once a temple of Pan. Old Bassæ, remote and little noticed, has continued there, hidden from all but a few shepherds and antiquarian robbers, while for nearly 2,000 years a new God has reigned. Though worn and eaten by every weather, being built only of rough and local stone, nearly all the columns still stand, carrying the architraves firmly, for they were designed by the same hand as the Parthenon. Half columns project from the inner walls of the cella, making rows on the inside, like the supports of church roofs. All decorations and sculptures have gone—plundered to glut the galleries of the British Museum. The view was the loveliest I had seen ; on the east the top of Parnon ; on the south-east and south the tossing peaks of Taygetus, gleaming with snow ; a little further west the top of the Messenian Gulf, creeping up, pure blue among the hills ; little borders of fruitful plain, and peaceful white shores. Ithome, I think, was hidden, but close in front stood the flat-topped citadel of Eira, and further south-west stretched the hills of the Messenian promontory. Fairest sight of all, looking west and a point north, one could see a tiny bay with a little fishing village, at the foot of green and purple slopes, the amethyst and sapphire blues of the sea running up into them clear and bright in the sun, though here and there a fleecy

<sup>1</sup> Compare my “Plea of Pan,” chap. i, “A New Pheidippides.”



cloud hung low down beneath our feet. The air was still and of peculiar purity, just scented with abundant thymey plants, and just sounding with the murmur of bees. Over all stretched the great sky, the marching place of the silent sun, destroyer and healer.

After getting back to Andritsaina, we started on a wild walk to Olympia. "Impossible!" the brigand of the inn kept mournfully repeating, for it was already nearly midday. Passing west and a little north, the track soon became steep and rocky, running up and down the slopes and dells of a fine valley, tributary of the Alpheus. It left the grey village of Nivitsa on the right, crossed a broad stream, and mounted a long steep slope to some houses long visible up the length of the valley. Here a crowd of fine peasants in national dress suddenly rushed out and tried to stop us, having many enquiries to make of such an extraordinary apparition as we. Half an hour further on, the track passes through a narrow cleft between two mountains, and suddenly emerges upon a great view to the north over the whole wide valley of the Alpheus, and far away west across the plain of Elis to the sea, where, under the setting sun, I made out a conical hill on some island—perhaps the Skopos of Zakynthus. The lines of the valley far across the river run out west of Erymanthus into long, even ridges of red and yellow sandstone thickly marked with evergreen trees, dark purple in the distance. The effect was more like a "classic scene" than other parts I have known, reminding one of Claude or of Turner's mythic imaginings, in its diffused and genial light, the innumerable distances, the sense of peace and great fertility and open-air joy; and at the end of all the dim blue line of sea. The mountains on our south side of the valley sloped easily down into broken hills, mostly sandstone, but some of lime and red rock; abounding in the largest trees I had seen in Greece—stone pines, olives and ilex, all very "bosky" and fit for woodland forms or the dances of nymphs with satyrs. Plenty of water ran on all sides, and the valleys grew currants, olives, maize, and wheat.

We kept the track along the mountain side about half-way down, and passed one or two dim villages, going to sleep in the twilight. One man more kindly than the rest, clutched hold of me and warned us to go no further because night was coming. But we held on, gradually descending, and walked or ran through a strangely "romantic" valley, with pre-Raphaelite hills and little rows of trees on the tops. By eight it was dark, but for the young moon's thin light, and then suddenly, on the edge of a wooded hill, the path split and was lost. We cast about in vain till, seeing far-off lights, I led over deep valleys and marshes, through woods and ploughed, high-heaped currant fields toward them, only to find they had vanished. After trying along a stream, where the frogs laughed all night, we climbed through a steep wood and out upon a hill-top, under shelter of which we lay for the night. The ground was wet and dewy, but no rain fell. Twice an east wind awoke and blew softly over our heads; then slept again. The moon sank behind a mountain in the west. To the south a huge star blazed till far into the morning. In the north the Bear slowly twisted round the Pole, as his manner is. By 5 o'clock the earth was brownish with day, and we started to walk. A fair track ran north-west down the middle of the valley, and as we climbed down towards it I saw a fine dark fox slink away over a ploughed field, the white tip of his tail betraying him.

We discovered afterwards that our sleeping place must have been within a mile or two of the lodge that Sparta gave to Xenophon at Skillos, where, with his sturdy sons and the wife for whom he wrote his essay on "Housekeeping," he lived like an English squire, setting aside a share of his hunting for Artemis of Ephesus in memory of old times. Of all Greeks he is the man, not, indeed, whom I admire most, but the one I should like best to have been; so accurate a traveller, so fine a leader of men, so humorous and kindly, so fond of animals and birds, so experienced in horses and dogs, and a bit of a philosopher besides, though cheerfulness would keep breaking in. Soon after six,

we reached Kréstona, upon a low hill, one of the many prosperous villages that fatten on that pleasant land, and even try to do a bit of factory work, when so disposed. Turning along a track to the right, we made our way nearly north through descending soft and earthy country, very fertile, to the marshes of the Alpheus, a broad stretch of reeds and sedge and low bushes, much like Wicken Fen, near Cambridge. Far off, I marked a ferryman's hut of upright poles and wattled thatch, on the top of which all three ferrymen were sitting, like rooks in a row. After due consideration, they brought their boat across the river, running it along a slack rope by help of the stream and a wheel in the bows, after the Severn fashion. The river was bright red and swollen with rain, about the same in size and pace as the Severn at the shallows when in flood. We got into the ferry-boat by climbing up two staves over the water, crossed, and following a path for about a mile up-stream came to the great meadow of Olympia, the whole of which, with its temple of Zeus, and Zeus himself, and all German archæologists thrown in, were less to me at that moment than one cup of coffee at the parsimonious inn.

All morning we hung about the ruins, seeing the waxy Hermes to whom the Teutons pray over their æsthetic coffee, some rather poor pediment figures and one glorious Niké, dedicated by the Messenians of Naupactus; face gone, breasts and arms all stuck together wrong, probably on the model of some German professor's wife in her nightgown; but the goddess still so lovely in her descent upon the world! Then I lay long on the top of the steep hill of Kronos, prickly with bushes, and basked in the enormous sun, which filled all the mountains and meadows, and brought out every kind of life—lizards and mice, swallow-tail butterflies and eagles, asphodel, veronica, anemones, geraniums, brooms, the various thymes, and many other plants that I did not know. At noon all lay still, simmering in the sleep of Pan, and just below me were the very stones from which all Greece rose up to do honour to Themistocles. As to the

Games, I should like to have witnessed the last performance, and to have asked the priests afterwards what they thought of the Galilean, and what of Zeus, still seated there, noble as ever in his ivory and gold. Now the place was silent but for a few antiquaries Germanising over the chaos of its ruins. In the afternoon we came on by train through the rich plain of Elis, so clever in getting itself declared a holy State, and therefore free from attack and the duty of fighting. It is now partly cultivated but largely waste, covered with low bushes, sedges, flowers, and even grass, and in one place miles on miles of great oak trees, very old. Many flocks of sheep were there, too, and goats, and a few cows. But the plain has a wild and gloomy look. We were aboard at Patras by 10 p.m., and slowly the town lights vanished. Then we passed the great rocks standing at the entrance to the gulf, faint in the moonlight, and Greece was left behind.

Who would not fight for such a land, or serve it in any capacity—the beautiful land where, for one brief century, the genius of mankind stood on the topmost rung of its climax? My opportunity came soon. In the year after my first visit to Greece, Abdul Hamid began his series of Armenian massacres, increasing in atrocity during the following year. A good many English people felt uneasy, dimly remembering that, less than twenty years before, their country had pledged herself to the protection of Armenia, and, though Lord Rosebery assured them that the obligations of a treaty could never be expected to last twenty years, they remained uncomfortable. Even Lord Salisbury warned the Sultan that he must set his house in order, and public meetings of the usual protesting character, passing the usual resolutions, began to be held. When, towards the end of 1896, the Greeks rose in Crete, and the Turks attempted to stamp out their demand for independence in the customary manner, indignation increased; and when Colonel Vassos conveyed a battalion and a half of Greek regulars to support the insurgents, enthusiasm rose high. Early in 1897



(February 16) I went to the Byron Society to propose the formation of a British volunteer force to fight for Greece, and was told that no such proposal had yet been made. I wrote to Metaxas, the Greek Minister or Chargé d'Affaires, and was politely thanked for my "philhellenic sentiments." More meetings were held, and nothing done. A fresh body, called the "Liberal Forwards," appeared, led by G. W. E. Russell and Herbert Torr, with the support of Dr. Clifford and even of Charles Gore, Canon of Westminster. On March 5th a great meeting assembled in Queen's Hall, and I went there, timidly resolved to force my proposal. At the end of the first resolution, condemning the Unspeakable One with accustomed unanimity, I stood upon my chair in the middle of the arena and tried to suggest action in place of words. The whole audience rose against me with howls of rage. Partly it was misunderstanding, because they did not allow me to be heard. Partly it was the startled indignation of people well-used to believe that, when a resolution has been passed, all has been accomplished. At that time, too, one often heard a pious appeal to the text, "Vengeance is mine ; I will repay, saith the Lord," and, in leaving further action to a Higher Power, an obvious solution was favoured which seemed at once secure, inevitable, and cheap.

So I was dragged down by the stewards (my first experience of that treatment), but as I continued to shout my proposal amid increasing turmoil, Russell told me to write it on paper. He read the note to himself and passed it on, as being merely a suggestion, to Metaxas, who took no notice. Perhaps both were afraid of the Foreign Enlistment Act. I thought nothing would be done.

But I was wrong. In the next few days the "Liberal Forwards" under Herbert Torr began enlisting for a British Legion, and revealed to me a plan for starting from Brindisi in open boats and landing somewhere "on the coast of Macedonia" (I suppose they meant Epirus). Captain Cullum Birch, an ex-regular officer, was suggested for command,

and perhaps it was he who dissuaded them from so crazy an adventure. On Sunday, March 14th, hearing that he and one or two others were starting next day for Athens, I determined to go at all costs. That afternoon, Vaughan Nash took me to the National Liberal Club, which I had then never entered, owing to my Conservative tastes and Revolutionary convictions. There he introduced me to H. W. Massingham, editor of the "Daily Chronicle," which in the precious year or two he had raised to a height of perturbing power, and it was he and his paper that inspired the more Quixotic or enthusiastic of the pro-Greek partisans. Within half a minute he asked me to write him letters from the front, if war should be declared. I instantly accepted, and in less than sixty seconds the whole course of my life was changed. On St. Patrick's Day, 1897, I sailed again for Greece.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE THIRTY DAYS' WAR

*The Better Part of Discretion is Valour.*

SINCE those days I have become so accustomed to travelling with some definite and difficult object that I could hardly now enjoy a journey for enjoyment. After three or four days I begin to weary of even the wildest scenes, or of the finest historic and artistic memorials, unless the journey is accompanied by the anxiety of an underlying purpose. It is only then that I can fully appreciate either beauty or the romance of the past. Those kinds of pleasure, like all happiness, come without design or effort, springing up unexpectedly like wayside flowers along a pilgrim's road, and they are not to be sought or plotted for. But on this, my first adventure, anxiety as to my chance of fulfilling the task before me obscured all other thoughts, and I travelled like a senseless log upon a whirling river. The journey was only relieved by a second meeting with Charles Waldstein, who was crossing from Brindisi, and showed me much kindness, though I was in no way connected with the great. He even asked me to read the proofs of a book his brother had written on the Subconscious Self, that grisly monster then beginning to emerge into daylight, like a long-forgotten madman emerging from his dungeon. I tried to identify the ghostly stranger with the "Wille" of Schopenhauer, but I daresay I was wrong, for that "Wille" is quite a decent creature in comparison with what the Subconscious or Unconscious Self has turned out to be.

At all the stations along the route from Patras to Athens there was much shouting and excitement, chiefly in

enthusiastic greeting to a party of the "Garibaldians," who had come to fight for Greek liberty, equipped only with breeches, red shirts, and rifles. During the campaign the poor fellows suffered horribly from hunger and cold—so horribly that in sheer coxcombry of charity, as Lamb called it, I gave one of them my spare shirt, and was myself reduced almost to their wretched condition ; and all to no purpose, for what was one shirt among a thousand frozen men ? They were under the nominal command of the distinguished anarchist Cipriani, to whom I had verbal introductions ; but unhappily he was always fast asleep when I found him. In Athens I was generously received by Henry Norman, at that time assistant editor of the "Daily Chronicle," and an ardent supporter of the Greek cause ; so ardent and so well accepted by the Royal family that the correspondents who swarmed around the palace gates grumbled that it was "Norman, Norman—always Norman " who was received. He did not actually introduce me into the Royal presence, but he took me as far as an ante-chamber—my first experience of that unendurable torture which the French call to "*antechambres*"—and he made me acquainted with an elegant person named Hadjipetri, A.D.C. to the Crown Prince Constantine, and quite celebrated, as I was informed, for the arts of dancing and cookery, of which I was no judge.

Ignorant of war, Athens stood a-tiptoe with excitement, as Thucydides, in a passage before referred to, says she stood at the beginning of her war with Sparta. Every hour the newsboys raced screaming through the streets. In every café the home-staying orators thundered exhortations to the brave. In front of the Palace, King George himself declared his intention of leading the troops and dying, if needs must, upon the Plains of Thessaly ; whither he never attempted to go, being reserved for another fate. At ten o'clock, protesting that they had never in their lives been out before noon, the Athenian ladies, as like Parisians as fashion plates could make them, drove down to the Peiræus to ladle soup into pitchers for Cretan refugees. Scores of families



were lodged in the National Schools there, the long classrooms being divided up by the school desks and benches into little pens, like a well-organised sheep fair, and each pen made into a separate family's home. It was my first experience of refugees, and all over the port and city to their various coverts I accompanied Colonel Le Mesurier, an old Indian soldier, who spoke no word of Greek, but diffused comfort and jollity by a resonant military voice. A few Englishmen were hanging about the hotels, uncertain of the British Legion's existence, and sick with waiting. But no one was as sick as I, until, with customary impatience, I told Henry Norman that I proposed taking a boat at Corinth and sailing round to Epirus. This scheme he forbade, telling me Massingham had just telegraphed asking me to act as his regular war correspondent. So I was to go to Thessaly and try to make my way over Pindus to Arta, if the Thessalian front was covered by another man. Nothing could be better. I consulted old Sagalas and other guides, who all agreed the route was quite impossible, and no one had ever traversed it within the memory of man. But, having received twenty-five pounds from Norman, I went down again to the Peiræus with a Greek named Scaramangar, who was useful as an interpreter, though he always attributed my actions to the direct inspiration of the devil, and we tucked ourselves away in nooks upon a filthy little steamer bound for Volo on the Pagasæan Gulf, home of Achilles and the Argonauts. At Chaleis, where the Euripus was rushing to and fro in its ancient manner, we found the royal yacht "Sphakteria" lying, with the Crown Prince ("Tino"), the Crown Princess (the Kaiser's high-spirited sister), and Henry Norman aboard, all looking cool and comfortable.

From the beautiful town of Volo, above which Pelion and Ossa stand piled, with Olympus glimmering in snow far away to the north, we crossed the Plain of Thessaly, suited for corn, and rich if only the waters flowing down from Pindus were distributed over it. So we came to Larissa, where the Crown Prince was received in military state by guns, in-

fantry, and a cavalry escort, which remained mounted to its own satisfaction. Here also I met for the first time J. B. Atkins (then for the "Manchester Guardian"), so attractive, so generous; Bertram Christian, afterwards so well known to me (then for the "Times"); and David Hogarth, already my friend as the "Wandering Scholar in the Levant," and I think the only man in Larissa who had any true foresight of impending disaster; though even I, in spite of all my hopes, was uneasy with foreboding as I walked over the Peneus bridge and along the white road to Tyrnavos, so soon to become the scene of historic rout. For it was there that "Tino" received his baptism of flight.<sup>1</sup>

Next day I received or suggested orders to traverse the whole of the frontier unless war came, and then, if I possibly could, to cross Pindus into Arta and the west. Here, as so often in various enterprises, my bounden duty coincided most happily with my desire; for, with my sole equipment of a little knapsack and a coat, I set off at noon across the burning plain for the Vale of Tempe, and that evening I walked right down it to the flattish delta made by the Peneus as it issues into the Gulf of Salonika. In those days that lovely valley was still undefiled by railway or other touch of civilisation. It was still much the same as when Apollo haunted it, and his sacred path led from there to Delphi. Ancient plane trees of enormous girth shrouded the entrance, growing beside the Peneus, which is here about the size of the Severn at Shrewsbury but even more rapid, and thick

<sup>1</sup> I need not follow the external history of this disastrous war, in which we all learnt the art of retreat better than any Red Book could have taught us. The best account of it is in "The Broom of the War God" (a title adapted from Aristophanes), by H. N. Brailsford, who remained with the British Legion in Thessaly while I went over the mountains to the Western Front. I met him for the first time in Athens after the disasters, but did not know him intimately till we were in Macedonia together during the rebellion of 1903, since which I have worked with him in many difficult enterprises, and like the rest of the world have come to regard him as in many ways the best journalist of our time; at all events for his unequalled knowledge of Near Eastern and Continental affairs; his one failing in this respect being a tendency to allow his judgment of other nations to be influenced by their treatment of animals, especially of cats.

brown with mud. On each side of the stream lower down, the foot-hills of Ossa on the one hand and of Olympus on the other rise in precipices to a great height, generally grey as in Dovedale, but sometimes deeply tinged with red. Besides the immemorial planes, the ilex grows in plenty, always gloomy, being the only tree to give its wood to make the cross of Christ. When I came within sight of the sea, I half hoped to find the Greek fleet lying off-shore there ready to assault Salonika and cut the communications between Constantinople and the bases of the Turkish armies in Macedonia and Epirus. But I was disappointed. For some unknown reason (perhaps because the money for loading the shells had been diverted to more private purposes) the Greek fleet did nothing throughout the war, and did it very badly ; except that one ship actually succeeded in capturing Sir Ellis Ashmead Bartlett, our pro-Turk M.P., together with his son, afterwards so well known to me in various campaigns, especially in the Dardanelles. That achievement took place exactly on the spot upon which I was looking from the mouth of Tempe, and it won for Greece the applause of appreciative ridicule.

From Tempe I climbed to the village of Rapsáni, rich in black wine and silk, where an outpost of Evzoni (the pick of the Greek army, dressed in the old national uniform, with short, white, expanding skirts like a ballet girl's) was stationed to guard the approach from Olympus. And so I made my way along the foot of the mountains, following the course of the Peneus westward to Tyrnavos, from which pretty town I climbed the Melouna Pass, the very road by which the Persians under Xerxes probably came. Within a fortnight it was to give an entrance to another invasion, but at the time Greeks and Turks still stood spying at each other in their neighbouring block-houses, and from the summit I looked north far over the Macedonian plain, in the middle of which lay Ellassóna, surrounded by orderly Turkish camps. George Steevens, afterwards to be so dear a friend, was then somewhere in that Turkish base, but in





THE VALE OF TEMPE





those days I had hardly heard his name ; and I went on past Revéni Pass and Zarkos to the largish town of Trikkala, where the Peneus comes down at right angles from the north, and is met by the torrent rushing through the Portais—the gates of the Pindus range, through which I knew at once that I should have to attempt the passage to Arta, declared by all to be impassable.

As I was struggling along this rocky frontier, I had observed some interesting customs. For the first time I saw the old Greek dance, as it was performed by a company of Evzoni, not for my benefit. About fifty of them, joining hands in three parts of a large circle, moved slowly round and round making a regular step with their slippered feet and tufted toes.<sup>1</sup> The leader was attached to the next man by a handkerchief in the left hand, and pirouetted, or crouched on his heels, and then bounded into the air, apparently as his own sense of fitness might prompt. Meanwhile the rest sang a melancholy song, full of twirls and quavers, that howled upon the wind. One song I heard was Odyssean : “ Why do you leave me to wash clothes in the river ? Heart of my soul, take me with you when you go to wash clothes in the river ! ” Another sounded more ominous : “ If you are still unwed, do not get married this year. This year there will be war and insurrection. This year mothers will weep for their sons, and wives for their husbands. This year the captain’s lover will be weeping for the captain.”

Another custom was kept up by little girls, who in Lent demand pence of every traveller that passes, chanting at the same time an unintelligible song, which I took to be a remnant of some ode to Aphrodite. For by immemorial custom they store up any pence they get against their wedding day ; and though Lent has nothing to do with weddings, spring has a good deal. Equally pleasing was the hospitable custom which I have since found general among the Balkans, especially in Albania, of roasting a whole sheep or lamb over a fire on the ground in honour of a stranger,

<sup>1</sup> See *Childe Harold*, Canto II, 71

giving him a leg or a saddle at his choice, and as a special delicacy handing him upon forks the brains, the tongue, and the eyes. I always did my best with the saddle, the brains, and the tongue, and even when it came to the eyes I gulped them down for the honour of my paper, but I sometimes wished my editor had been present to share such ungrudging hospitality.

At Trikkala, among the clattering storks, in hopes of avoiding those terrific Portais, where storms of snow and thunder seemed always to rage, I formed the plan of following up the Peneus to its mountain source, crossing the Turkish frontier to Metsovo, and so making my way through Janina to Arta. It would have been a glorious journey, but the Turkish Consul put every obstacle in my way ; perhaps fortunately, for I should certainly not have come through alive, or dead. In hopes of diverting my desire, he even invited me into his house and left me to peruse his library, which consisted of an anthology in twenty volumes, called " *Monstres Parisiens* "—a choice selection of every possible abomination ; at least I can imagine no other. Insufficiently grateful for that privilege, I went up-stream as far as the largish village of Kalabáka, where I heard the Andarti were concentrating for a raid over the frontier. The Andarti (probably the word by derivation only means Insurrectionists) were the Irregulars, who had gathered like locusts from all parts of Greece, impelled by patriotism and the hope of plunder. Each had a rifle, a goat's-hair cloak, and a cap, usually marked with the badge of the " *Ethnike Etairia*," or National League, under which they were roughly organised into bands. These bands (banditti, as the Turks called them) swirled up and down the country like autumn leaves, advancing when they liked and retiring when they liked, always ready to murder or to run, both at long range. One could not imagine anything more demoralising for a regular army than their presence, except perhaps their rapid disappearance when danger threatened. They assured me that theirs was the Balkan way of fighting, and I have long

since discovered they were right. But it does not follow that the Balkan way is the best.

A savour of sanctity hangs about Kalabáka. The old church, as is not unusual, is decorated by some "Pictor Ignotus" with vivid representations of the hell that awaits evil-doers. The souls of men, children, and especially women are depicted in torment, their flesh rent with red-hot pincers, and branded with fire, their limbs devoured for ever by monstrous sharks and beasts of terrific blends. Even more loathly abominations are added, especially in the case of women—such fancies as the poor human race has invented to add to the fears and miseries of this actual world, which in themselves might be thought sufficient. In the same spirit of terror, illumined by the hope of escaping corporeal pleasures, monks and hermits for centuries past have perched and built their nests among the precipitous cliffs and pinnacles of rock which rise above the little town. How those isolated masses and columns of black or greyish rock, looking like basalt and rising in places, I suppose nearly 2000 feet from the river level, were formed I do not know. For miles around, the whole region seems a crazy jumble of all Leonardo's backgrounds, or a drunken giant's dream of home, and on the most inaccessible points monasteries have been constructed, or hermits have strewn sticks and straws for their lonely couch upon a shelf or precipice. This they have done in contempt of the world, and for refuge from feminine members of their own and other animal species. Many of the monasteries and eyries are empty now, and can be reached only by birds. But to me the marvel grows how the first builders ever got up; for the exploits of Alpinists pale before the agility of those religious climbers. Here and there one sees lengths of rotting ladders swinging in space, but someone must have scaled the heights before the ladders were swung, and zeal for ascetic contemplation could undertake no more fearful hazard. Almost equally marvellous was the skill which built the outer walls of the monasteries into the living rock, flush with the face of the very precipice, so



that from the window of the cell where I slept one night I could have jumped clear down for many hundreds of feet, if horror of the flesh had overwhelmed me, or the memory of its delights had suddenly tempted me back to the world.

After an arduous climb, that monastery could be reached by a drawbridge thrown over a dizzy gulf, but to another I ascended by a different route. Standing at the foot of the cliff, I shouted, and presently saw a little thread appear high in air, with something at the end. It came slowly down, and proved to be a sufficient rope, with a network bag hanging to it by a hook. My companion and I crept into the bag, laced up the top, and shouted again. With a jerk and a swing we began to ascend, our arms and legs sticking through the meshes like the heads and tails of fishes in a net. At the top we were hauled in by two shaggy monks and dumped beside the windlass. Having seen the dark chapel, the incredible galleries built out over the verge, and a monk who had dwelt there unspotted by the world for immemorial years, we were again laced up in the bag, and another uncombed monk, his brown flesh peering through his raiment at the most unexpected intervals, kicked us off into space from the scaffold, so that we went spinning down and ever round. My interest was increased because I had discovered that this monk was the local idiot, who was given the privilege of controlling the windlass as being incapable of any more distinctly religious office.

On leaving the other monastery, where we stayed the night, my Greek companion warned me that I should be expected to kiss the Archimandrite's hand. I asked him to give me a lead, and he got through without a check. Then I came boldly on, and resolutely seized the proffered hand. But at the moment something invincible arose within me. I jibbed, shook the hand cordially and bolted. "We don't do that sort of thing in the Buffs," I inwardly murmured, remembering the words of the British Private who was beheaded for refusing to kiss a mandarin's foot. But all these trivial embarrassments were forgotten when I climbed

down from the Meteora (as these isolated sanctuaries in the air are called) and heard in Kalabáka that three bodies of the Andarti had gone forward to the frontier, intent on provoking war. Seeing a gap in the mountains due north, where the frontier would be nearest, I hastily followed up a tributary of the Peneus, which comes down from the west to turn south at Kalabáka, and running most of the way, because anything moves quicker than a Greek horse, I came to a wretched village well named Kakoplevra. There I met wounded Irregulars limping back, dripping blood and howling horribly, as was always the Greek way; for which reason Lyeurgus instituted cruel penalties for the offensive display. A large band had crossed the frontier that afternoon and assaulted two or three Turkish blockhouses, in one of them capturing nine prisoners, who were just being brought in and lodged in the village school. They were afterwards returned with apologies to Constantinople, but that was the beginning of the war (April 9th), though the regular declaration was to come nine days later.

It was late, and a kindly peasant (in every land I have found peasants kindly) gave me the hospitality of his one living-room, built above the stable. His charming, but frightful wife, whom he said he had married because he wanted someone to help with the digging, waddled about like a she-bear, and among the other inhabitants of the room were two boys, a girl of fourteen, a suckling, two cats, a bevy of chickens, and a long-haired pig, which ran in when it desired company or warmth. There was no furniture, and we squatted round the burning logs heaped in the middle of the floor, chewing the sticky paste of half-baked maize, tempered by wine, brought up in my honour from a hole in the floor. The blinding smoke escaped as best it could, partly through two tiny unglazed windows, for glass is unknown in these mountains. Long festoons of soot hung down just to the level of our heads. After supper we all lay down in our clothes without further fuss. The suckling wailed, the chickens clucked, the cats howled, the woman

snored, the pig grunted, the horse sighed beneath our heads, and we enjoyed a real Chaucerian night together, till at dawn the whole menagerie gathered round to see me wash ; for I had a bit of soap.

Deep snow had fallen in the night, and I plunged through it up the hills till I reached a point on the Turkish frontier and looked down upon the wretched village of Báltino, in the midst of which stood a large white block-house, with puffs of smoke issuing from the loop-holed windows. For smokeless powder, though invented, was not in use during this war. About 130 Turks under two officers were besieged in that little fortress, and swarms of Greek Andarti were running round it, shouting to each other, firing at the loop-holes whenever they felt inclined, gathering into gesticulating knots for conference, and scattering again without result. A good many were wounded, and six were killed, but they kept up the futile tactics all day, and in the following night the whole of the Turkish garrison escaped in a blinding snowstorm. After midday I hastened back to the telegraph station at Kalabáka, coming under fire on the way from a Turkish block-house, because some Andarti who were with me insisted upon taking pot shots at an officer standing there. My telegram to the " Chronicle " was the first news of actual fighting received in London, and I mention it because I think it was my only actual " scoop " in all my experience of wars.

By the regular troops stationed at Kalabáka my news was received with regret, for the attack made war inevitable. Feeling sure that the next fighting would be just west of Báltino, I resolved to follow the Peneus up towards the difficult pass leading over Pindus to Metsovo and Janina, and I still had a vague hope of working round to Arta that way, if only I could cross the frontier before war was declared. So up that narrow defile I made my way, fording the river torrent ten times within the first few hours, and delighting all day in the great variety of life along the track—thrushes and crested larks (in all Greece I have heard the

skylark only once), cuckoos, spasmodic hoopoes, hawfinches, goldfinches, jays, hooded crows, hawks of many kinds, great white kites, superb eagles, snakes and vipers in plenty, sparkling green lizards two feet long, and under almost every bush a tortoise lumbering in the grass, anxious to marry, but not to marry in haste. Here also I found the peculiar caterpillar that, up to the snow line, but no further, builds an enormous nest of white web at the ends of the spruce branches, and walks to a new nest with its companions in line, head to tail, without the smallest break. I measured strings of them five or six feet long in perfectly straight lines, but I could not say how they learnt their strategy. The Greeks think they never turn into moths but are doomed to wander as worms for ever; but the moth is in fact common enough—a fat, fluffy thing like the English tussock.

Far up the pass I came to the last habitable village, high above the defile. It is called Malakási, a Latin name, for the inhabitants of these regions talk among themselves a Latin dialect, relic of the Roman Empire. And it was strange to reflect that almost certainly by this very track over Pindus Cæsar himself led his legions from Dyrrachium (Durazzo) and Apollonia (Avlona or Valona) into Thessaly for his triumph over the Pompeians at Pharsalia.<sup>1</sup> Over these rocky precipices his men had clambered, swearing their Roman oaths, and from these self-same mountains his thin and firm-set face had looked down this desert gorge of the young Pencus to the distant snows of Olympus, where Zeus was then still living, as Cæsar perhaps remembered with a smile. Above Malakási there are a few hamlets, inhabited only in summer, and there the men and women follow the ancient Spartan custom of living separately, the men in one village and the women in another. Whether, as in Sparta, the men also follow the excellent rule of visiting the women only by stealth, I could not be sure. Probably not, for I noticed the paths between the hamlets were well worn. Nor do the women hold so equal a position as in Sparta. For in

<sup>1</sup> See Mommsen's "History of Rome," Vol. IV, Part II, p. 412.



the largish house where I was invited to stay at Malakási, the wife, big with child, handed round the customary glasses of jam, water, and "ousa" on a heavy bronze tray, but, by an impolite fiction, she was supposed to be invisible. Girls are never sent to school, because it is not worth while to teach them anything, and a father will tell you he has three sons and two "unregistered," meaning two daughters.

Before dawn I scrambled up a difficult path to the frontier again, and there, in a miserable village called Koutsóúfliani, I found a disorganised mob of Andarti who had been driven back with some loss from the small Turkish town of Kránia. A good many Italians were mixed up with them, and the old Anarchist Cipriani was lying on the filthy street so sound asleep that I did not care to wake him. I conversed with all manner of men and officers alike, even with Milonas, who was in what might perhaps be called command of the disorderly crowd. But I could get no definite idea of what had happened beyond what my eyes told me of defeat. Here was a little skirmish, never to be heard of again to all time. The fighting had lasted only a few hours, and was just over. I was on the spot and in the midst of eye-witnesses, actual participators in the conflict. Any historian would envy such materials, but the truth of the event was undiscoverable by me. The description of battles in our histories have always filled me with admiration, but since that day I have more than ever marvelled at the insight and accuracy with which historians can describe almost every minute in the enormous conflicts of the world, even many years afterwards. The battle pictures of artists are to me equally astonishing, so superb is the imagination displayed. But on this occasion, by far the best comment was given me by a huge Cretan, who, with the Cretan black handkerchief wound round his head, was sitting gloomily apart, when suddenly he turned to me and cried: "If you had been there, you would despair of Greece for ever."

Next day I followed the steep pass up to the summit, just below the very top of the Pindus range, here still bearing the

name of Mount Lakmon. Thence I looked down the precipitous descent into Epirus, and spread out upon the opposite mountain side there lay the Turkish town of Métsovo ; grey, with an old walled castle in the midst, and seven big guns in position on a ridge above it. In the far distance the snowy cliffs of Albania, to be well known to me in future years, rose like crests of jagged wave breaking to the north, and near at hand I could trace the thin and precipitous path leading down the valley from Métsovo to Janina and the rustling Dodonean oaks. That was my way to Arta, but the Turks were now firing at everything that moved, and with sorrow I turned back again to Kalabáka, and so down to Trikkala and the entrance to the Portais, through which I had always known I must pass.

And so it came about. For I received a direct telegram from Charlie Williams, the old war correspondent of the "Chronicle," saying that he was watching the Thessalian frontier, and I was to cross Pindus into Epirus, if I possibly could. The little money given me by Henry Norman was almost exhausted. The Demarch of Trikkala offered to hire out two horses just for the day, but they were dying and could not even start. Scaramangar never could walk. So I resolved to set out alone on foot with my little knapsack, though everyone told me it was impossible to cross the mountains because of the snow, and even in summer it took five days on a mule. I calculated that on foot I might do it in three days, and made my preparations. But, fortunately for me, the correspondents in Larissa, hearing of my successful "scoop," were arriving one by one. Bennet Burleigh, afterwards my hostile associate in other campaigns, appeared for an hour. In my diary I just noted, "Maud of the 'Graphic' also arrived," little knowing how dear a friend I was afterwards to find in that true artist and high-hearted man. But for the moment the most important arrival for me was J. B. Atkins, of the "Manchester Guardian," who with unexampled generosity lent me one of his purchased horses to help me to the foot of the mountains,

and to be returned that afternoon. Of course I returned it, with a boy, but it never arrived. For that afternoon the war began in earnest, if one may call the war earnest, and it was not until many days afterwards that Atkins caught sight of the horse's familiar face during one of the disastrous retreats in Thessaly and forcibly recovered it.

For Western Churches it was Easter, but for the Greeks Palm Sunday, and women were bringing long branches of bay for the church decorations. The scene was the very emblem of peace, but as I crossed the Peneus and turned west into the defile of the Portais, I heard far away the boom of guns. War had begun, and the Turks were forcing those passes of Revéni and Melouna for their descent upon Larissa. Following my orders, I proceeded gloomily into the mountains, passing a bare mound where Cæsar once stormed and sacked the fortified town of Gomphi in an earlier spasm of mankind's madness. After traversing the defile, we came to the remote village of Mousáki, whence I had promised to send back the borrowed horse. As is usual in Greece, the whole population crowded round to stare at the stranger and ask questions. My demand was for a guide and any four-legged thing that could carry my companion. All agreed that Spero was the man, and the name sounded hopeful. Spero was dragged forward, a brown and shaggy man in a long brown coat tied with a bit of string. He reminded me of Pan and John the Baptist at the same time. He had crossed the mountains to Arta only a few years before, and was the only man who had ever tried, except one French explorer, who had turned back on the second day. And Spero possessed a little stallion besides. But he steadfastly refused to move. "I will not go," he said; "I am afraid. I am afraid of the snow and the Turks."

The Demarch, keeper of the general store, then conducted me, accompanied by all the villagers, round the village, which had been devastated by the Turks just twenty years before, though it was then Turkish property. In the church, where the Turks had slashed the faces of the saints as usual, I saw

the bones of the dead laid out along the altar screen, as custom or the rocky soil directs. For at the end of three or four years, the dead are dug up, and their bones arranged inside the church. These are blessed and washed with wine, and if anyone still loves them, flowers are laid around the skull and thigh bones. Then they are buried again, occupying much smaller space. If the bones are white, the soul that once dwelt in them is in Paradise and all is well. But if they are dark, all is not well ; very much the reverse. Those that I saw were almost black, but they smelt of resined wine, and someone had laid flowers upon them.

On returning to the market-place, I found Spero beside his pony, weeping great tears, but otherwise resigned to a dubious destiny tempered by rewards. And just as we started, out rushed a queer old figure, dragging another pony and crying, " You shall pay me the same as Spero, and you shall be in Arta in five days ! " He confirmed this statement by a peculiarly complicated and filthy oath. " If we are not there in three days, I shall hang you both to your ponies' tails ! " I answered, but did not swear to it. So we set off amid cheers and loud cries of " Impossible ! " My main anxiety was the secret that my money had sunk to less than ten shillings, and now I had two horses, three men, and myself to feed.

That evening we reached only the next village, where a young schoolmaster lent me Plutarch's Essay on Aristeides to soothe my slumber on the floor of the shop. But the track next day was very difficult. We had to climb the bare and crumbling sides of a great, dome-shaped mountain, still called the Tympanos or Drum, which makes the watershed between the tributaries flowing into the Peneus and out to Tempe, and the tributaries of the Aehelous (now Aspropotamo or White River) flowing into the Gulf of Corinth. The ascent is like a perpendicular ladder, so steep that we had to push the ponies' feet fast into any possible hole and crevice, and then the summit was covered with soft snow reaching nearly to their bellies.



Down the other side we plunged into a sunless gorge where a dreary village starved on sticky maize ; and beyond that, the narrow track traversed the face of cliffs so sharp that we had to haul at the bridles and grip the tails of the ponies to prevent them rolling sheer down into the torrent below. After crossing that torrent several times with much excitement, we came to the main stream of the Achelous, which, white with snow and flood, was tearing over hidden rocks, unfordable by man or beast. Fortunately a few woodmen were driving felled pine trees down the stream, and, guiding half a dozen of the trunks athwart the current, we stemmed them up with long poles, thus forming a floating bridge, across which the ponies were induced to creep with much difficulty and peril. But on the opposite bank the track had disappeared, and we clambered about the precipitous mountain side in vain. Then at last the men sat down, each with his pony's nose in his lap, and declared they would go no further. I told them that they might find some difficulty in crossing the river again, now that the pine logs had gone down stream, and that I certainly should not pay them (secretly, I could not !), but would go forward by myself. Putting on my knapsack and taking my compass in hand, I then set off vaguely in the direction of Arta. But I was hardly out of sight when I lit upon the track, and at my shout they followed, reconciled without tears.

Skirting along the edge of a precipice above the river, we came to a wretched village called Láscovo, where two priests were worshipping God with a rushing gabble, surpassing in rapidity any religious service I have ever heard, though I know the English cathedrals well. About twice a minute they bumped their foreheads three times on the pavement with extraordinary agility, but till we arrived their only audience was God and the village idiot. The elder priest kindly invited us into his house, and lighted a fire in the middle of his largish room, which had no furniture but two heaps of petticoats, aprons, and rugs, woven at home as dowries for his two daughters. It being Holy Week, he

then gave us a share of his maize-paste and olives, but when my Greek thoughtfully suggested that I was a Protestant, the priest exclaimed : " Oh, he's an idolater, is he ? Then he shall have an egg." So an egg I had, seasoned with idolatry. And when his wife and daughters had eaten up any scraps that we had left, we all settled down for the night together. But long after I had crept under my rug in the place of honour furthest from the pet goat, that shaggy priest kept bringing in members of his flock to stare at me as an object lesson in anthropology, until at midnight he went out to worship in the church again. In the morning we left him loading a manure cart, while his daughters, bare-footed and unwashed, splashed about in liquid mud, driving the goats to the mountains with stones and barbaric cries. For ten-pound down, my Greek told me, I might have married one of them, dowry and all, but my only thought was the contrast between this priestly home in Pindus and the country rectories that I knew at home.

Hardly had we crossed over an unimaginable gorge and raging torrent by a marvellous bridge of one arch hung high in the air, when I saw a man hastening down the path towards us. " I was in Arta on Sunday," he cried. " The War began in the afternoon. The Turks crossed the river by tying Christian women in front of them. All the women were killed. Their shrieks were frightful. The town lies flat in ruin. To go on is death." I told him he lied, but though I tried thus to encourage the others, they struck again, and again I went forward alone on foot, till I heard them slowly following, muttering libels upon my ancestry. Already I could sometimes discern the boom of guns far away, and the rest of that day was to me a nightmare of precipices, slushy snow, gorges gloomy with black ilex, a river white with flood, and another high-arched bridge, while the ponies crawled and crawled.

That night we spent in a barn at a dripping village, rightly called the Sewer of Sorrow, and next morning we had to climb the enormous barrier separating the Achelous from

the basin of the Arachtos, which flows by Arta. The track was murderous for the beasts, and rain fell in sheets. My old man went lame, and though I gave him a pair of my socks well soaped, we hardly moved along the obscure and stony way. Unhappily, too, we met a long train of refugees winding into the mountains, and the horror of their imaginary tales turned all three men rigid with fear. They sat down and definitely refused to stir. It was the worst of the mutinies, and I only won through by mounting the old man's pony and urging the miserable creature on. Loving his pony more than his life, he followed, and the others followed him. So we struggled on, starving and much exhausted, till late in the afternoon we came to an abrupt edge of mountain, from which glimpses of vast distance westward were here and there revealed through heavy mist. Unknown mountain tops stood islanded above the cloud. There was a plain and an estuary dividing it, and spaces of dull blue water like lead, which I knew must be Cleopatra's Ambracian Gulf ; and far away, high up in the sky, one thin line of silver, which was the open sea. At my feet in the depths of a broad valley, a white road ran, and at the end of it, almost encircled by the white curve of a river, stood a town, and walls of an old castle beside the stream, and high on the hill a large square fortress, and further off the clustered domes of a Byzantine church, and the line of an ancient bridge. That, then, was Arta. I had crossed Pindus in three days and a few hours, and there was no need to hang my men to their ponies' tails.

Descending to the village of Peta, famed for a miserable defeat of the Greek rebels by the Turks in Byron's War of Independence, I was greeted by officers and men, who rushed out shouting, "The Turks have fled ! The Turks have fled !" It was incredible but true, and since then I have never believed the word of a refugee. From their positions on a semicircle of hills and plain across the river, completely commanding Arta, which was then the capital of Greek Epirus, the Turks had fled in panic the night before.

They were Redif or Reserve Troops, under command of an incapable Governor of Janina. Separated by some two hundred miles of dubious road from their ultimate base at Monastir (so familiar to me in later years), they were probably ill-supplied, and they ran in terror of two largish guns (about 5-in., I think) planted by the Greeks beside the old Turkish barraeks commanding the famous bridge of Arta. The town itself, dirty and beautiful, stands on the old main road from Missolonghi and the Gulf of Corinth up to Janina. The road here crosses the Araëtos by a tenth-century bridge, built by the Eastern Cæsars, and with such difficulty that the builder could not make the central pile steady until he built up his lover alive inside it. In memory of which piteous cement the Greeks still sing an ancient ballad.

The town itself is full of ruined mosques, and has a few immemorial churches, besides the fine Byzantine cathedral, saered to the superb but questionable saint, Theodora of Arta, who ended her shameless harlotry as wife of the Emperor Justinian. Around the domes, the crumbling minarets, the high, grey walls, and the enclosed gardens with their orange groves, thousands of small brown hawks chase the flying insects, which they catch in their mouths, just like swifts.

The 16,000 men under General Manos were pouring over the bridge, some towards the fortress of Preveza, at the mouth of the old Gulf of Aetium, but the majority up the two roads to Janina; and on the Greek Good Friday, saluted everywhere by the joyful greeting, "Christ is erueified for us!" I found thē main body and General Staff at the largish town of Philipiádes. There the Greek population were enjoying a revel of arson, setting fire especially to the banks and houses of money-lenders, whose account-books littered the streets, mixed with exquisitely written copies of the Koran. But in the midst of the triumph I heard whispers of evil tidings. A battalion sent forward along the mountain road to Janina had been driven out from a strong position called Pentepegádia, or the Five Wells, with heavy



loss, and early next day I found the wounded dribbling back, bloody and groaning, enough to spread panic, which they did. One brought news of the death of a fine young Englishman, Clement Harris, a nephew, I think, of Admiral Harris, then commanding off Crete. Harris had joined the Corfu Andarti, and this refugee told of his fate with all the dramatic detail of the Messenger in a Greek tragedy. The Turks, he said, had captured him alive, bound his arms behind his back, cut out his tongue, scooped out his eyes, chopped off all his fingers and toes in turn, and finally burnt him alive. There was nothing improbable in the story. Turks, Greeks, Montenegrins, Serbs, and the rest of the Balkan peoples are all capable of similar abominations. But in this case there was not a word of truth in the story. Harris had refused to run, was surrounded, and though already wounded, was simply shot down where he stood. Some deep instinct told me the story was a lie. Happily I did not publish it, and ever since I have been very careful about accepting tales of atrocity without the confirmation of my own eyes ; though I know perfectly well that it is impossible to exaggerate the cruelty of man.

By this time my money was reduced to two drachmae (about ten pence at the exchange). I fed the ponies only by turning them into the fields of young corn, and the three men expressed great discontent at starvation. But on Easter Eve a fresh supply descended upon me as though from heaven, and I was able to pay the men and buy their ponies by forced purchase. I told them that if I did not buy them the Greek army would certainly seize them, and they had no choice. Still the older man protested with grievous tears. That little brown pony was his joy, his wife, his child, his all the world. I feared that, like the Arab in the poem, he would fling me back, not my gold, indeed, but my roll of dirty notes. But, after wailing half the night, he rose, tried to fall on my neck, and set off on his lonely climb back over Pindus. John-the-Baptist Spero remained, but was ultimately lost to me in a panic.

On Easter Sunday (April 25th) I was thus able to advance up the mountain road towards Janina, while the Greek soldiers and refugees were killing and cooking Paschal lambs under every green tree. After moving for about ten hours and leaving the beautiful mountain village of Koumzâdes, we came to the summit of a pass up which a regiment of Evzoni was attempting to recover the ground the Greeks had lost at Pentepegádia. On a neighbouring hill I found Scudamore of the "Daily News," and E. F. Knight of the "Morning Post," encamped among all the equipment with which a war correspondent ought to be provided, though I have always feared to hamper myself with such a lot of stuff—a large green tent, two horses that could move, besides pack-horses, servants and messengers, cases of provisions, cooking utensils, plates and cups and forks, bedding, field-glasses, water-jars, and every other contraption that the heart could desire and the desert lacks. I did not see Scudamore again after this campaign, except once in the Strand, when he seemed in a pitiable condition. But I was often with Knight, and always glad to be. For he was always one of the most gallant of men, one of those who are commonly called "Elizabethan," and when he lost an arm at Belmont in the Boer War, I only remarked that the wonder was he had any limb left to lose. Soon after this, my first meeting with him, we came under rather heavy shell fire as we stood together, and I observed that, in spite of his courage so often proved, he turned up his coat collar.

Having thankfully partaken of their lamb, I advanced again further up the pass to a grey little village, hardly distinguishable from the mountain side, called Karvársaras. It was of course deserted, and I forced my way into a strongly fortified old house, entirely empty, and there I held out alone for four days, my Greek going back to Arta for provisions. I had a sort of bread, and most fortunately I had blown off the head of a cock upon the route, and continued to eat the carcase till the maggots became really too animated. It was a happy time—the silence, the view towards Janina

and its lake, or towards the wild ranges of Lakka and the heights of Souli, where the women in Byronic times joined hands for their last national dance, and one by one danced over the edge of the precipice rather than submit to the embraces of a Turk. Here, too, the scholars tell us the breed of Sparta first arose. But in spite of all these delights, I must needs go out, first to a battery that was firing from a low hill, and then right up the pass itself to the firing line. On the way I came under serious fire for the first time, and I found at once that the "Subconscious Self" grew outrageous in its protest. As the bullets came humming past me like heavy bumble bees, I tried in vain to overcome that hidden traitor which lurks within us. I remembered that Goethe, when under fire, had "seen brown," and I was disappointed that I saw neither brown nor red. Mountains, sun, and flowers looked exactly the same as usual; only I was seized with a peculiar affection for them, as though I could not bear never to see them again. I thought of a passage in George Meredith where he says that men who suppose they are tired of life should go and hang over Alpine precipices for a while. I had never been in the least tired of life, but I was in quite as favourable a situation for discovering its value. I knew that no Englishman could possibly show fear while a lot of wretched foreigners were watching his behaviour. But whenever a bullet shrieked past me, or fell with a puff and a splash into the road, my Subconscious Self uttered its protest none the less, and it was all in vain that I abused it, calling it a merely animal passion for existence, and "a blood-thirsty clinging to life." It took no notice of my abuse, but continued its outcries till at last I sank down among the hospitable Evzoni who were lying as the advanced firing line under cover of the rocks. There I could watch the little puffs of white smoke burst from the edge of a rise some 500 yards in front as the Turks fired. On the many subsequent occasions on which I have come under dangerous fire, my sensations have been very much the same, and I need say no more about them.

The only improvement has been a slightly increased confidence in the size of space, which often allows room for a bullet or a shell to pass very close without killing; and, indeed, I have been wounded only once—on Chocolate Hill, Suvla Bay, August, 1915—though many escapes have been narrow.

For the next few days, as I said, I lived alone in my fortress house, disturbed only by the owner who ventured back from Artá and asked to be allowed to sleep in his own kitchen. I did not care where he slept, for he brought news of the disastrous flight of the Greek Army in Thessaly, and the occupation of Larissa by the Turks on Good Friday. I knew it was the end, but refusing to give up hope, I spent many hours on the summit of a high mountain ridge upon our right, helping the Evzoni to build a low wall or sangar as protection from the Turkish fire. For the Turks were almost continuously assaulting that ridge with guns and rifles, and by peering over the skyline I could watch them advancing from point to point in skirmishing order, the white-capped Albanians being conspicuous. That wall was a wonderful piece of masonry, and I used to think I should like to visit the place again in old age to see if it were standing, but I have never been there since. In reward for my assistance, an Evzonos offered me a lamb's white entrails wound round a stick, but I then made a rule which I have not broken—never to take food or drink from a soldier in the field.

The firing died away at sunset, for the Turks did not fight by night, but next afternoon (April 29th) it was renewed with terrible vigour. The Greeks on the summit hesitated. They looked behind them. In straggling blue lines they came rushing down the mountain side. Hardly had they gone when the crest swarmed with black figures, shouting, waving red flags, and firing down upon us in the valley. A thin note sounded. "That's the Turkish trumpet!" shrieked a peasant woman at my side. At once all the populace bound their possessions on women's backs, gathered in their children, cows, goats, sheep, chickens, and all they valued, and with incredible rapidity were gone. Even my



Spero did not wait. I packed my pony, and led him out of the empty village. That night the village was burnt.

The Andarti fluttered away like blown leaves. The regulars buckled on their blankets, and hastened to join the herd of fugitives. There was no attempt at defence. Officers and men just walked out of the trenches and disappeared. Women crawled under burdens that almost hid them from view—huge sacks, rolls of bedding (often with a baby in a cradle on the top), iron pots, loaves of bread, a chicken or two and the family petticoats. One woman had a baby lashed to her back, and a little calf round her neck. Girls crept bent double under their loads. Children stood by the way screaming with perplexity and fatigue, or scrambled barefoot along the rocky track, driving a kid or lamb. For some distance three of them clung to the back of my pony, and then vanished again.

The Turks did not pursue, but alarms continually renewed drove the rout onward. It was soon pitch dark, but, fortunately, dry. After leaving the hills, the road passes between steep and rocky heights on one side and, on the other, a deadly marsh over which fire-flies and will-o'-the-wisps were dancing. So through the obscurity we stumbled along the way, lighted only by the malign glare from blazing Philipiádes, until the smell of orange blossom showed me that we were approaching Arta. At about three o'clock in the morning we forced a passage across the steep and narrow bridge, which from end to end was a wriggling mass of soldiers, guns, yelling fugitives, and beasts, many of which sprang over the parapets into the torrent and were drowned. It was my first experience of panic.

For the next few days the town and its surrounding fields were like a vast and distressful picnic. All the army came back, and the soldiers roamed the streets, gesticulating and mutinous. No defence was attempted, though on riding again up that road alone, I found no Turks in sight nearer than Philipiádes, some six miles away. In Arta itself there was plenty of flesh to eat, for the soldiers plundered the

flocks, and the shepherds were glad to sell lambs at a shilling apiece, and chickens at sixpence. But bread was scarce ; salt ran out ; there was no fruit or vegetable of any kind, and only the turbid river water to drink, fouled by carcasses that made the whole district stink. Under the miniature shade of every tree the peasant families huddled together, cooked their beasts, thumped the clothes for washing, and rocked the cradles, as though fleeing from the Turk were the most natural thing in the world, as indeed it was. For myself, driven from an empty house by innumerable bugs, I lived with the ponies out in the fields.

At last, hearing that all telegrams and letters were stopped for fear of spreading news of disaster, I set off for Patras, on the Gulf of Corinth, to make connection with my paper. It was a three days' ride of peculiar beauty through the little-known region of Aetolia and the Acarnanian bays. A land of long lakes and brimming water-courses, which flow through forests of ilex and the Valona oak, it is different in character, as in history, from the rest of Greece. The dwellers in its mountains and slips of plain were cut off from the other tribes of Greeks, and spoke dialects almost as rude as barbaric tongues. At one point I came upon the full torrent of the Achelous that I had known far up among the gorges of Pindus, but a mile or two before I reached it the narrow road was almost barred by the remains of massive walls and gates, the ruins of an old Greek city which moulders there untouched. A shepherd told me its name was Stratos ; and at the word a passage of Thucydides came dimly into my mind. For he tells how a detachment of Athenians once tried to penetrate into Aetolia, and at a place called Stratos were surrounded by semi-barbarians and destroyed. This, then, was the scene. Here those bright Athenians, who had heard Pericles on the Pnyx and watched the Parthenon building, were surrounded and destroyed.

After a few days' lucid interval in Patras and Athens, a subconscious uneasiness drove me back to Arta, and there

I found the Greeks making a final effort—a really gallant effort—to retrieve their lost position upon the hills across the river. It lasted for two days, during which the rain fell in torrents. At one point, as I heard afterwards, the Greek attack was very nearly successful, but it was resisted by reinforcements of Nizam or regular troops, and by the morning of May 15th all the Greek battalions were dribbling back into the town. Nothing was left but to watch the Turks burning the dead in heaps upon the hills, and to bury the Greek bodies which had been recovered. I estimated the Greek killed at about three hundred, most of them belonging to the 10th Regiment from Corfu and the islands—an impulsive and energetic body of men, whose losses were attributed by their envious friends to breaches of the oath of chastity that all the army took. General Manos spoke a few soldierly, inaudible words over the shallow graves. Others sought the consolation of rhetoric, and I remembered that other funeral oration in which Pericles praised those who showed themselves brave not in words only but in deeds ; for I understood now why the old Greeks insisted to satiety upon that classic distinction.

After sleeping out in the rain for two nights, I found shelter in a rambling old house beside the river, and feeling civilised owing to the presence of a plank bed, many sacred pictures, unconquerable fleas, and two old women, I imprudently undressed at night. But suddenly firing was renewed in the darkness. I heard the customary sounds of panic, and supposing the Turks to be storming the town, as they might have done at any moment, I ran out nearly naked to see what was happening. The firing died away, but I returned to my planks so rigid with internal pains that my Greek began to call for help, screaming as usual, and an old woman came, looking like one of the Avengers who dog the guilty for their good. Taking no notice of my agonised protests, she pounded my stomach with clenched fists, and then cut a square of bread from a loaf, stuck an upright match at each corner, placed it carefully over my midriff,



and lighted the four matches, so that they looked like a brilliant altar burning in honour of some gluttonous god. Taking a glass tumbler, she inverted it over the altar, and screwed the edges deep into my flesh. A vacuum being thus created, the contents of my inside seemed to be drawn up into the tumbler, with extreme torture. Meantime the goddess of destiny, lifting her eyes and hands to heaven, muttered charms and incantations which I could not understand. But the ritual so reminded me of scenes of Thessalian witchcraft described by Apuleius that I laughed, and gradually recovered. Before an hour passed the pain had gone, and the witch told me that, had those enchantments not succeeded, she would have tried methods still more potent and obscure.

Then came the end of the war. It was Tuesday, May 18th. In the late afternoon we heard a trumpet blowing from across the river, and a small party of Turks, preceded by a white flag, approached the bridge. A telegram had come from Constantinople announcing an armistice, and by the intervention of England and other Powers, Greece was saved from an invasion which would have easily advanced to the Gulf of Corinth on one side, and to Athens on the other. The town gave itself up to joy. Hungry, wet, defeated, miserable, sickened with stench, worn with malaria, dysentery, and typhoid, surrounded by every form of agony and death, none the less, as the cavernous shops took down their shutters and displayed the remnants of their wares, the people went to and fro along the filthy street, cheering and laughing as though the heaven of victory were theirs. So sweet it is to be unexpectedly alive. On a couple of boards, under the orange trees by the river, I gave a peculiar dinner to the Greek officers I knew, and in wine that tasted like the rinsings of medicine bottles we drank "To the Future of Greece!" It was a daring toast.

On my return to Athens, I began my long but much-interrupted acquaintance with William Miller, afterwards



for many years correspondent to the "Morning Post" in Rome, and widely known for his histories and his rare knowledge of mediæval Greece and modern Italy. I waited for some days, during which I encountered the most hideous adventure of my life, being assailed by two armed brigands on the summit of Hymettus, which I had climbed with a beautiful young English girl. The horror of about half an hour was overwhelming, and yet I was hardly conscious of it at the time, being too much occupied with devising a plan of escape by edging away to a point where she could suddenly disappear into dead ground. Owing to the girl's perfect steadiness in carrying it through, we got away; for, I suppose, the brigands hesitated to shoot us, though every moment we expected the shots.

Early in June a telegram from my editor sent me to Crete, and I passed through the islands—Andros and Tenos, and double-citied Syra, and low-lying Delos, Paros with Naxos close behind, and Seriphos and Melos, all haunted by gods. And so I came to Crete, where British ships then lay on guard, while detachments of Welsh Fusiliers and Seaforth Highlanders were scattered about in the coast towns—Heraklion or Candia, Rétimo, and Canéa, where I put ashore. All the Powers except Germany had sent little bodies of troops and a ship or two, nominally to uphold the sovereignty of the Turk, really to watch each other, lest one of them should grab the great harbour of Suda Bay. On the highest point of the old fortifications at Canéa their variegated little flags fluttered around the crescent and star of the Red Sultan whom they were defending, while at the town gates a Turkish sentry was faced by a Seaforth Highlander on guard, and one hardly knew whether the aspect of the situation more resembled a burlesque or a child's birthday cake. It was called "The European Concert."

The only evidence of harmony that I discovered in that Concert lay in a smart little café at one end of the harbour, called "Au Concert Européen." Some Under-Secretary had

lately informed the House of Commons that starving Crete was doing a "roaring trade," and this one point in the desolated island certainly was doing it. There the officers of the Concert sat, drinking healths and concluding commercial arrangements with feminine apparitions who lurked in the corners and were wonderful linguists. Originally there had been but three of them, but economic law had curtailed their monopoly, and one afternoon a steamer from Smyrna brought fifteen or twenty more. On behalf of Turkish morality, varying in some respects from the European, the Custom House authorities at Candia and Rétimo had rejected them as contraband, and with shame and tears the poor creatures had steamed on to Canéa, only to encounter an official ban of similar austerity. Whereupon a chivalrous Italian officer, perceiving their distress, called upon two sections of his men and charged along the quay to the rescue. He drew up his forces with fixed bayonets on each side of the gangway, and between the lines the dainty shoes, charming chiffons, and wayworn faces marched into the town in grateful security, there to carry on that roaring trade eulogised by our Under-Secretary. Certainly in the whole of Crete I found no other roaring note but murder and destruction.

My orders were to find out, if possible, from the Christian insurgents themselves what they really wanted. Guided by my usual good fortune, I strolled out one Sunday afternoon with my dear interpreter friend, old Sigálas, best of all dragomans, whose only fault was a tendency to call upon the mountains to cover him whenever he saw a Turk; for he had been present at the Turkish massacre of Christians in Canéa a few months before. Passing through the garden suburb of Halépa, we climbed a rocky edge where, beyond the line of Allied outposts, I happened to detect a Greek flag flying. French sentries ought to have shot us on the way, but we passed unobserved among the rocks, and allayed the passions of the insurgent sentries simply by shouting the Greek words for "Daily Chronicle," so powerful among

the Greeks was Massingham's influence then. By mere accident I had lit upon the very head-quarters of the eastern bands, and they seated me in the place of honour upon a table in a little cottage, while three officers sat upon a bed, and the room was soon crowded up with rifles, revolvers, Cretan knives, and fine Cretan males, all wearing the black handkerchief round their heads, and trousers like an undivided bag. Having instructed the peasant's wife to milk two goats into a tumbler at intervals for my refreshment, they began the conference. The details are now unimportant, for they demanded, first, the immediate withdrawal of the Turkish troops from an island which, out of 300,000 inhabitants, counted only 75,000 Moslems; and secondly, they demanded ultimate union with Greece. As is well known, the British Admiral Noel compelled the withdrawal of Turkish troops in the following year because they fired upon British sailors; and the union has now long been accomplished. But to me the interesting point about that conference is the thought that probably one of those three officers seated on the bed was Venizelos, of subsequent Greek and European fame.

On our way back, the French sentries did their duty by firing at us, arresting us and running us off to a young British officer, who released us when I pleaded I had people coming to dinner and was most anxious to pass the city gates before they were closed. At the gates I observed to the corporal of the guard—a Seaforth Highlander—that I wondered they did not shoot every Turk at sight. He replied, “We have strict orders to the contrary,” and I recognised the power of British discipline.

Next day, the Italian Admiral, who was the doyen of the Concert, very reluctantly gave me a pass to cross the lines, assuring me the Cretans would shoot me, and the Turks hang me on an olive. Knowing I could not be destined to two deaths at once, I rode out one lovely June morning with Sigálas, who gallantly refused to leave me, and passing over the conspicuous entrenched hill called Shoubashi, where the

Concert held its last outpost, we entered the "neutral zone"—"neutral" meaning that one came under fire from both sides. The wild land was full of oleander in bloom, and the carob, or "locust bean," used as fodder for cattle, and also for the adulteration of champagne and cocoa, showing the plant's remarkable versatility. But all the villages were burnt, the olives and orange trees cut down, the vines left unpruned, the people starving. The only sign of hope I found was one old woman in a ruined village stirring a puddle to make mortar. For the sixth time since her virginity she was rebuilding her house, and she supposed she would have to rebuild it once or twice more before she died. By the exercise of such energy one may acquire a fine personal interest in the word "home."

As we approached the insurgents' outposts, we were received with the customary "independent fire," but tying my handkerchief to a stick I rode on, conscious of innocence and of a secret letter stitched into the lining of my waistcoat. After being embraced with fervour, we were escorted to the head-quarters at Alikianû, where several hundred insurgents were lounging about, hungry and unhappy, under the orange groves. There we held another conference, with four officers, the men standing round and confirming the statements of their leaders with shouts and brandished rifles, so that the scene was like an early English wapentake. In discussing the union with Greece, I suggested that even the Athenian Government was not an irreproachable model of wisdom and incorruptibility; but thereupon the rifles began to rage so furiously together that I requested Sigálas to change the subject.

In the evening we rode back to Canéa along the coast, but next day I came out again, accompanied by the Cretan Professor Jannaris, known in those days for his dictionary of modern Greek. I suppose by his influence, I was privileged to sail down the coast in our torpedo gun-boat "Dryad" (Captain Pelham), and was put ashore at high-piled Platanéa. The Captain trained a gun to protect our landing, for



swarms of insurgents came down to receive us, looking very savage, as usual. But again they embraced us with arms only too open, especially as Professor Jannaris, being a Cretan, was greeted as foster-brother by everyone born in his village, and submitted to being kissed at intervals during the day by scores of bearded and tattered compatriots, whose refinement did not coincide with university ideals. Whenever this happened the Professor turned shyly round to me and explained that he did not comply with the native custom because he liked it. After further conferences at headquarters, I escaped alone into the mountains and ran almost to the foot of the grand central chain called Leukas, or White Mountain, a series of superb gorges, cliffs, and peaks, running up to some 9000 feet ; and there I lay watching for some hours, secretly hoping to get sight of the beautiful wild goat, still not uncommon there, but happily very hard to shoot. At last an insurgent discovered me, and having given me much information about the locality and the political situation, added that the great chief, Hadji Mikháli, had long been awaiting me at supper. As the man had been talking for three-quarters of an hour, I recognised the habit of the " Messenger " in old Greek tragedies, and ran down the mountains in some concern.

Hadji Mikháli (or Michalis) was the type of a Cretan hero. His white beard streamed to his waist, but he bore his stature of six feet five as erect as a young man. His whole life, like his father's, had been spent in battling against the Turkish oppressor, but his highest renown was won in the great Cretan insurrection of 1866-69, when his exploits in attack and defence grew to myths. For two hours he discoursed to us under the olives while the nightingales sang, and every now and then the little Greek owl uttered its single, most musical note. Then he compelled me to sleep on his wooden bench in the kitchen, and next morning I saw him ride away on a mule to execute justice in a neighbouring village. For Hadji's decision counted as law. The owner of the small white house that sheltered us was also a remark

able man—a barrister who had studied four years in Paris, and had even married a Parisian lady. But she had died, and her successor was a Cretan village girl, with hair plastered down on both sides, and two pigtails at the back. Like all Cretan women, she was supposed to be invisible to men, but when I went down to the rivulet in the morning to wash, she came and washed beside me with idyllic politeness. In return for her hospitality I gave her a cake of pink soap that I had bought in Athens. I was afraid she would eat it, but she knew better.

A few days later Sigálas and I sailed for Kalamáta on the Messenian coast, and then rode over the mountains, once the haunt of Spartan boys training for endurance, and so down the Langada Pass and through deserted mediæval Mistra to Sparta—to long-desired Sparta at last.

That night, beside the stream of the Eurotas, I watched the water sliding from pool to pool over its broad and stony bed between the oleanders. Those were the pools in which the Spartan men and women used to bathe, and there they came to worship the Two Brothers who agreed never to see each other again to all eternity, but to live and die on alternate days rather than have their affection dissolved by final extinction. Close at hand upon the west rose the peaks of Taygetus, cleft and torn by earthquake and torrents, while in the sheltered gorges the drifts of grey snow gleamed under the moon—that moon which so often played a dominant and dubious part in Spartan history. Silent around me lay the plain of hollow Sparta, fertile in orange and olive and mulberry. It was here, then, that the Dorian race came down to live from the rough land of Epirus which I had seen ; and here they conformed to that stern rule of conduct which seems to us incredible. To combine and obey for the one intangible idea of Sparta's honour, to surrender all personal tastes and desires, and to make no account of words—those were the directions laid down for them by their lawgiver. He laid them down because he rightly

estimated the racial weaknesses of Greeks. He inculcated a savage limitation and atrocious submission to "that cold-hearted monster, the State." Happily for us all, the future of mankind did not lie with Sparta. Except for the record of a few noble lives, a few compact and living sentences, preserved only by her enemies, Sparta has passed away, leaving hardly a trace, as Thucydides foretold she would, while her rival's influence in every form of human intellect and art seems likely to last until mankind disappears from the earth. But the very existence for several centuries of such a mode of life—that prolonged triumph of human resolution over the common nature of man—was as marvellous as any supernatural miracle, almost as marvellous as the Athenian genius itself. So, at the moment when it was a relief to remember that greater things than miracles have sometimes happened in history, the thought of Sparta's peculiar distinction, and the sight of the valley where she had actually accomplished these marvels, though now it is bereft of every vestige, cast some gleam of encouragement in the midst of a disaster which in those days it seemed impossible to exaggerate.

Unfortunately, my first, and perhaps worst, attack of malarial fever overcame me there, and my return to Athens by way of Tripolitza and the Arcadian plain was only a dream of accumulating misery. In Athens I owed a return to life to Noel, the famous Englishman of Eubœa, to Dr. Abbott, who had come out in charge of the "Daily Chronicle" hospital near the Piræus, and to Sigálas who nursed me incessantly with deep sighs and groans of sympathy. At last I was shot on to a ship, and in passing Sicily was able to assist some remnants of the British Legion in celebrating the second Jubilee of our old Queen. And so I came to England, which is, after all, my spiritual home, being the only country in which our difficult and complicated English nature can be understood.

## CHAPTER X

### HANGING SWORD ALLEY

*“ Was ich besitze seh’ ich wie im Weiten,  
Und was verschwand, wird mir zu Wirklichkeiten.”*

*“ Faust : Zueignung.”*

SOON after my return from Greece, being still full of malaria, I followed my habitual longing to fly west with the sun for ever, though it was not the United States that I yearned to reach. I was almost content by getting as far as Ireland, which for six years past had seemed to me a fairyland of such incredible beauty that I hardly believed it could exist. In all my journeyings I have never been disappointed, for I have invariably found people more agreeable than I expected, and countries more beautiful. But in Ireland, which is the most beautiful country of the world, I naturally found an excess of beauty that was overwhelming. No doubt the associations of the Irish people, their history, their sufferings, their attractive nature, and my deep friendship for some among them coloured my vision. But it was a radiant vision that has never faded through the long experience of twenty-five years, and has grown only the brighter with knowledge which, for an Englishman, has been unusually intimate. So deep is this inexplicable passion that the sight or even the imagination of any Irish scene, no matter how dreary others might think it, stirs my heart like the cry of a curlew flying.

At dawn one August day in 1897 I first saw the Irish mountains rising from the sea, like the land of Tirnanog, or like those islands called Hi Brazil which sometimes appear still further west than Ireland, and would remain to be all mankind's spiritual home if only the fishermen who put out



in chase of them could fling a brand of fire upon their shore. But this first visit I spent in ranging about the mountains south of Dublin, and joyfully exploring the mere outside of the city itself. For Dublin ought to be the most beautiful of cities, having a mountain river (in those days a drain of filth) in its midst and close at hand wild mountains, "silver strands," cliffs, and the sea itself, besides being mainly built at a period of noble architecture, the finest embodiments of which then stood unconsumed by patriotic fire. I met hardly any of the people who were soon afterwards to become my best friends in the world, but almost every morning I went down to swim from the isolated rocky ledge at the foot of Dalkey cliffs, where the fever germs slid out of me and were drowned, like the serpents drowned in the tarns beneath Croagh Patrick when the saint told them to begone.

From these rapturous delights I was recalled by the appeal of the artist, John Fulleylove, to write a text for his excellent sketches of Greek architecture and scenery. That I did, and at the same time I set about my book on "The Thirty Days' War," besides working in odd moments at another essay for my "Plea of Pan," and composing a lot of verses. But by such charming pursuits no one could maintain a household or pay for the education of a rapidly growing boy and girl, and when in Greece I had resigned my only steady source of income (the £100 a year as secretary to the London Playing Fields). Then came Massingham's generous invitation to join the staff of the "Daily Chronicle," which he had made the most conspicuous and most heroic paper in London. It was an offer that almost any writer would have eagerly embraced, and I regarded it with gratitude, but with the deepest apprehension. As usual I was overcome by panic at the idea of writing anything at all. Though I had written a good deal even in those days, it seemed impossible that I could ever put two sentences together, least of all to order. How appalling if I should be found sitting helpless before a blank bit of paper while the

printers clamoured for "copy!" I was aware that my knowledge of most subjects attractive to the readers of newspapers was a vacuum that editors abhorred. Added to this unhappy ignorance was the curse of my wretched shyness and self-distrust, always tempting me to avoid association with others, and making me so sensitive about writing that up to this day I cannot endure to sit in a room while anyone is reading my "stuff." But even stronger was the objection that journalism meant the end of imaginative work. Like most people outside the profession, I thought of "mere journalists" with mingled curiosity and contempt. Drawing a sharp line, like most people, between "journalism" and "literature," I was all on the side of literature. What was worse, like most people, I regarded a journalist as a man without convictions—a conscienceless person who would write equally willingly for any opinion or cause, provided he were paid. Like most people, in my ignorance I did the great profession insufferable wrong, but my ignorance was profound.

Happily for me—on the whole, happily—the necessities of livelihood settled the question. Many friends warned me against the decision. I remember Henry Norman, himself at that time one of the most prominent among journalists, warning me that I ought to devote myself entirely to imaginative work, which would probably even be more lucrative in the end. York Powell, shrewdest of critics, who appeared to know my "Neighbours of Ours" by heart, also warned me. But after a period of my customary hesitation, I plunged, and on the whole I am still glad. I suppose I might have been a literary man. I might perhaps have spun imaginary stories, or even novels and dramas, out of my inner recesses, as a spider spins thread. That would have been a high and enviable achievement, and I feel deep admiration for those who can so trust their genius and restrict their lives. But, at all events, I can say "I have lived." I have seen much, suffered much, known many noble characters, and in the affairs of this actual, though

transitory world, have been given the opportunity of playing some part.

My terror when told that I should have to write a leader one night was ludicrous and painful. I wandered like a distracted dog about the streets around the "Chronicle" office, which then opened on Whitefriars Street. I looked into the dark river, wondering whether it would not be better to end life at once, like Hood's importunate girl, who after all, had sold only her body while I seemed to be selling my soul. For the first time I read the ominous name of the narrow lane which ran behind the office. It was "Hanging Sword Alley," and I prayed for the sword to fall. Tremulously I climbed the stairs and faced the editor amid the secretaries, writers, and printers buzzing round him. I was told to write three-quarters of a column on the terms slowly being arranged between Greece and Turkey. I felt sure that I could not write a word, but encouraged by Vaughan Nash, who shared my room with one or two other leader-writers, I sat down, started, and finished the thing, well up to time and without the smallest difficulty. In the newspaper world, it is a fine and almost invariable rule that blame should be attributed seldom, and praise never; but I heard afterwards that the editor was pleased, and, what delighted me almost as much, the compositors were pleased, because my handwriting was so easy to read compared with that of others. (In the office it was said, indeed, that one compositor was specially retained for L. F. Austin's writing, since no one else could make it out.) But, in spite of these encouragements, I have always approached my work in daily and even in weekly journalism with a nervous apprehension, almost paralysing until the actual writing began; after which I have never thought of anything but the subject.

Not that I was a great leader-writer. I had not the calm assurance of William Clarke, that model Liberal, who died all too early in Herzegovina. For, when summoned to the office, he would write his leader as though he were making a

fair copy of his prize poem, and he never needed to wait for a proof. I had not the legal acumen (almost too acute) of B. F. Costelloe, who apparently could unravel diplomatic knots whilst his pen ran on. He used on certain nights to sit opposite me at the table, and long before others knew it I had discerned the terrible disease of which he was too soon to die, already distinguished for his knowledge of law, his indefatigable power of work, and his childlike Catholic faith. I had not Henry Norman's knowledge of the Far East, nor Vaughan Nash's knowledge of practical economics and Trade Unions. Nor had I the extraordinary power that I found in Brailsford when we were together as leader-writers on the "Daily News" some ten years afterwards—the power of beginning to write the moment he sat down, his infallible memory always supplying the required knowledge in due form, as from the labelled compartments of a treasury.

For a full-column leader, or a column-and-a-turn, I liked to have two hours' time before me—half an hour to think round the subject or even read what had lately been said about it, and an hour and a half to get the stuff down in slip after slip as the boy took it away. It is true, I was often driven hard, especially as Massingham in the days of the "Chronicle's" greatness had a way of slithering down the hill of Whitefriars Street in a hansom at 11.30 or even at midnight, though the whole leader page had to be in the printer's hands by one in the morning, and the proofs corrected by half-past or two. Going down to the office never later than ten, I would sit and wait, cursing him as deeply as he, later in the night, loudly cursed the printers and the universe. But somehow or other I always got through, in spite of my tormenting anxiety. I suppose the greatest rush I ever had was when, in later years, the news of Zola's death came suddenly after my usual leader was finished, and I had to write a full column upon Zola straight off. I finished it under the hour, and yet it was intelligible. But I had an exhausted journey home in the old horse tram.



Of course I suffered, as all journalists suffer, from the "cuts" necessary to fit one's "stuff" in, and sometimes from the divergent opinions of an editor. Once, for instance, when the real editor was away, I find the significant entry in my diary: "All my leader watered down into pigwash for West End swine." But my worst troubles in this respect belonged to a later date, under a very different editor, and my agreement with Massingham's outlook was so complete that I had little cause to writhe. Journalists know that an alteration of style may often be as irritating as a divergence in policy. A famous Extension Lecturer once told me that when he hinted that a pupil's facts did not appear quite to support her principles, he received a letter saying, "You may harry my facts as you like, but for my principles I am prepared to die!" Put "style" for principles and many journalists would say the same. But even on the point of style I never suffered from my first editor. Sometimes our judgment coincided almost supernaturally, as once, when I had been writing a long review of Bernard Shaw's "Perfect Wagnerite," an immense improvement occurred to me in the middle of the night after my stuff had been sent in. I rushed down next day to insert it, and found the very words of my new idea already there in the proof. I stood astounded. My faith in Natural Law began to shake. I asked for the "copy," and found that the editor himself had put in the improvement (not at all an obvious one), and in the very words I had in mind.

Massingham was, and as I write (early 1923) he still is, beyond comparison the best editor I have ever worked under. Passionate, especially against injustice and cruelty, and abused by the vulgar as "emotional" (which I think means quickly responsive to fine instincts), he has been usually guided by an assured and decisive insight that none of the temptations of social position or worldly influence can blind. No one seizes the heart of a vital or complicated situation with such unerring rapidity. "There it is," he seems to say at once, and one feels that to be the end of the

question. Violent and outrageously indelicate he might well be, for there is a charming admixture in his nature which once made me describe him as "a delightful combination of St. Francis and Rabelais," each part of the description being heartily applauded by different sections of my audience, who knew him well. And, indeed, St. Francis himself could hardly surpass his simple human-kindness, nor Rabelais his primitive language and tolerant acceptance of natural man in every phase. As to his high services to liberty and national honour, I still may quote without alteration what I wrote in the dedication to him of my "Essays in Freedom" (1909):

"The battle of freedom is never done, and the field never quiet. For how many years—it must be at least fifteen" (it is nearly thirty now)—"from my place among the camp-followers I have watched you upon that field, flashing and flickering in the van of the turmoil, smiting the foul swarms of the enemy, charging them full in front, hanging on their flanks, often defeated but always heartening your men with your confidence; sometimes overwhelmed, but always leaving the brutish victor with the uncomfortable sense that though the gods smiled on his cause there was one who did not smile. Indeed, if you give them time, the gods themselves have a shamefaced way of slinking round to your side and pretending they have never left it. Whether the battle has been for the poor, the prisoner, and the subjugated, or whether it has been for the just, the pioneers of enlightenment, and rebels of glorious fame—wherever you found ranged against you the heavy battalions on whose side the Prince of Darkness always stands—the heavy battalions of wealth and Society, of authority and custom, of military force and traditions of conquest—in all those years you have hardly fought for a single cause in which the victory is not already yours."

This remarkable man, of course, dominated the paper, for it was still the day of great and personal editors in Fleet Street. For the five or six years of his office he so inspired the "Chronicle" with his personality that its bitterest enemies had to read it, and those who abused it most loudly

regretted its collapse when he was compelled to resign.<sup>1</sup> But besides those distinguished members of the staff already mentioned—William Clarke, Vaughan Nash, Costelloe, and Henry Norman (assistant editor and literary editor till early in 1899)—the paper was helped along by James Milne, who twice a week, year after year, with Scottish persistence and unvarying manner, contributed a column called “Writers and Readers” upon books soon to be published, and probably had a more intimate knowledge of publishers and the titles of books than any man then living. And hidden away under the roof at the top of the office, a strange and invisible figure, sat Pattison, own brother of Mark Pattison, the model scholar and Rector of Lincoln College, Oxford, and of the famous Sister Dora of Walsall. How that shy and gentle creature lived no one ever knew. I believe that once or twice a year he wrote a special article upon the Board of Trade Returns, but he never wrote anything else, and yet sat always hidden in his unvisited lair.

Very different was Charlie Williams, “the Old War Horse,” as we used to call him. A son of Antrim, he was heavy, deeply scarred, the hero of fourteen or fifteen campaigns, uncertain in temper, violent in action (there was a myth that in earlier days he kicked an editor downstairs and took over the command by the right of the strongest), hard drinking but never drunk, rivalling the editor himself in flowing language of universal condemnation, and loving to sit in a punt all day far up the Thames, no matter how hard it rained, fishing with rigorous persistence and never catching anything. Experience had taught him a good deal about war as it was then understood, and still more about field-days—so much that I once heard Evelyn Wood say, “When I see old Charlie shut up his telescope, I know it is all over.” I sometimes went out to field-days with him, and

<sup>1</sup> Very shortly after I had written this account, that great editor was compelled also to resign his position on “The Nation,” which he himself created early in 1907 and had maintained at a high level of excellence for just over sixteen years.

he could introduce me to Evelyn Wood (his hero), Wolseley (whom he claimed in part to have "made"), Buller, the Duke of Connaught, Haig, and others; for he was well thought of in the army, and had a private notion that even Kitchener would not have hanged him, though he was a war correspondent.

No one could have admired and liked the old hero more than I did, but unhappily our friendship was for a time violently interrupted. One day he fell seriously ill with recurrent fever, and that very same night the Naval Estimates came in. Service estimates of all kinds were his special delight. So to make enquiries I went round to his queer rooms at the top of a house close to Waterloo Bridge, and was received as usual by the welcoming outcries of various dogs and parrots, and the smile of a comfortable woman devoted to his service. But the Old War Horse neither welcomed me nor smiled. He glared in silent rage, and, remembering the fate of his previous editor, I retired down the stairs of my own free will. Having myself treated the Naval Estimates by the editor's command, I called again next day to enquire whether Charlie was better. I heard a terrific roaring inside, but the door remained shut, and the next day both the editor and I received abusive letters, committing my body and soul to eternal torment if I ever ventured to approach him again. I did not venture until, a few weeks afterwards, I was appointed literary editor, and then, on the first day that I apportioned books for review, I stole into his den with two good war-books and asked if he would do them. It was just in the way of business, and nothing had happened to appease his fury. But now he was all sweetness and gracious courtesy, and so he remained in regard to me until the end, helping me with campaigning advice, giving me the best introductions, and even passing on to my keeping his two huge leather camel-trunks, which in South Africa became the curse of my life and the sport of all beholders.

Variable in temper, he was also variable in religion. Being



by nature a profoundly religious, or at least theological man, nurtured, I suppose, in the strictest Ulster Protestantism, he regarded the question of creed or of ritual as one of everlasting moment. Before I knew him, he had passed through every known existing phase of Christian doctrine, and had probably tried the obsolete heresies of Gnostics and Nestorians as well. In the end, he told me, after profound study and judicial balance of evidence, he had convinced himself that the Church of England represented the truest form of the Faith, and that her ritual stood upon the surest foundation. Accordingly when he insisted upon going with Kitchener to Khartoum (because he had been up with Wolseley in the attempt to rescue Gordon, and pleaded to be allowed to go again, though he was old and I was all prepared to start)—when he had gone and returned, safe but for a scratch on the cheek at Omdurman, he designed a bishop's mitre as he alone knew how, had it carefully constructed, and wished to present it to the Bishop of London as a thank-offering for his preservation. It was a fine ornament of ivory and gold, set with precious stones, tempting to any bishop; but Creighton rather sternly insisted upon an alteration in Charlie's way of life before the gift could be received into the sanctuary. Charlie was much perturbed, for that particular way of life added much to his domestic comfort. But at last, the poor old fellow yielded, at least for a time, and I presume this original but only true mitre is now included in the treasury at Fulham, or wherever else the bishops of London hoard their consecrated "trumpery," to use the Miltonic word.

Early in 1899 I succeeded Henry Norman as literary editor of the "Chronicle," and in those fortunate days for literature it was a rather important position. Three whole columns of the paper were nearly always given to reviews or other literary subjects every day, and hundreds or thousands of people took the "Chronicle" for those columns and nothing else, to such a pitch of excellence had the page been raised by Massingham, its first editor, and by Norman in

succession. Unfortunately for me, the editor had (and on the "Nation" continued to have) a habit of cramming in all the most interesting reviews first—a journalistic device excellent for readers but embarrassing for the literary editor. The consequence was that, when I took up the task I found eighty columns of "over-matter" already set and stowed away in my drawers. Eighty columns of reviews, and those the dullest that could be selected! A few were so appalling in dreariness that I had to scrap them and pay the writers off. The rest I worked through by a series of literary supplements, still possible in those days—each supplement giving me about eleven columns. But of course I had to dilute the ditchwater with better stuff to make it endurable, and the beginning of my business was hard. However, I inherited a good staff of reviewers, and before I resigned the position at the end of 1903 I had worked that staff up to about the finest set of literary critics then to be imagined, and it was an age of literary criticism. Before the change of editors during the South African War, while I was shut up in Ladysmith, I could rely in the first place upon Bernard Shaw, whose genius was then known to a fairly wide circle. His assistance, it is true, could be called in only occasionally, and once when I had sent him four or five books on Wagner and other musical subjects for a joint review of a column and a half, he wrote violently refusing to do the work except on special terms, and threatening the paper with all the terrors of the Authors' Society, in spite of his admiration for our editor.

To which I replied :

"DEAR SIR,—I am directed by the editor to inform you that he will see you damned before he gives you more than five pounds for the article in question.—Yours, etc."

Shaw's answer ran :

"DEAR SIR,—Please inform the editor that I will see him and you and the whole of the 'Chronicle' Staff boiled in Hell before I will do it for that money.—Yours, etc."

Whereupon I asked that the books should be returned so that I might send them to someone of less pecuniary weight, and he wrote the article with his accustomed generosity, as I had always expected he would.

Then I had Lionel Johnson, exquisite critic and writer, English by birth and life, but gifted with strong Irish and Catholic inclinations. He lived in a hotel in Fleet Street, and it was believed he could never write until he was well drunk. No doubt he drank a good deal—had done since his Winchester and Oxford days ; but his copy (when at last it came, after I had forced it out of him) was written in a steady and legible hand, almost without correction, and I never thought of even reading it before sending it up to the printers, so excellent it invariably was. But one night (September 29, 1902) when I was working late in the office, a message came that a man had been found apparently dying in Fleet Street, and the only clue to identity was a letter in his pocket addressed to me, but not signed. I went to St. Bartholomew's Hospital, and was there shown Lionel Johnson lying on a bed, breathing heavily, but quite unconscious, the skull being fractured. It appeared that while bringing me his "copy" he had fallen down at the corner of Whitefriars Street and knocked his head against the curb. The doctors told me his skull was as thin as paper. He never recovered consciousness, and soon afterwards we buried that true poet in an ordinary grave at Kensal Green. But every time I pass the cemetery fence upon the Great Western I think of the exquisite writing he always did for me, and, as is but natural, especially of his essay upon my own "Plea of Pan."

Almost the only other critic whose work I could send up without reading was William Archer, always so safe, so sound, writing with such knowledge, and every now and then displaying a wealth of satire and imaginative power little suspected even by his intimate friends. For artistic books I had the Pennells, Joseph and Elizabeth, both so clever, so capable of writing, and he so apt to raise the vicious contro-

versy that enlivens artistic circles. For novels there was Hubert Bland, the Fabian, who always grumbled if I could not give him two or three columns a week, and whose acute and energetic brain must, I think, have become sodden and blunted with the vast number of novels he clamoured for and, at least partially, must have absorbed. Edward Clodd, whom I once truly described as "the friend of genius and the genius of friendship," and who gradually became the dear friend of myself as well, could be trusted to write an article on folklore and primitive beliefs that surpassed in learning any book he was reviewing. Alfred Haddon, the "Head Hunter" of New Guinea, was equally good on everything connected with anthropology, primitive ritual, and Cats' Cradles. William Morrison, the famous prison chaplain, could write of criminals and prisons with something more than knowledge. For essays, dramas, and graceful books I and my successor always had L. F. Austin, till his too early death in 1905. He was the highest type of the "urbane" man; courteous, graceful in mind and body, recognised in all intellectual society as well as in the theatres, himself an essayist of charming individuality, the very best of after-dinner speakers, and at home within a mile or so of Pall Mall, but nowhere else in all the world; and yet entirely modest, amiable as a pleasant child, and except in appearance giving himself none of the airs appropriate to the man-about-town.

For poetry and fine literature I had Arthur Waugh, himself a poet and one of the surest critics, endowed also with unusual knowledge and an excellent style. For the occult and semi-mysterious side of psychology I had Frank Podmore, the entirely sceptical but prominent member of the Psychical Research Society; and for Scottish folklore and Celtic literature there was Eleanor Podmore, possessing a singularly delicate gift of words. For Irish history and literature, as well as for Shakespearean times, there was Mrs. N. F. Dryhurst, always bringing with her the wit of Ireland, the kindling inspiration, the flaming wrath, and a sarcasm like the lick of a lioness's tongue. Sometimes, too,



Henry Norman would write, chiefly on the mechanical inventions that always attracted him ; and sometimes the editor himself would give me a column of his alert and eager criticism, especially on politics or the drama. Of " outside " or casual contributors I remember only Sir Charles Dilke and Menie Muriel Dowie, but there must have been many more.

After the change of editors I enlisted Clarence Rook, who joined the regular staff as editor of the " Office Window " while I was in South Africa, and was always one of the most " useful " and delightful writers on almost any part of the paper. He was a man of singularly sweet and well-balanced disposition ; sensuous but restrained, indifferent to politics and happy in friendships ; sympathetic without philanthropy, and espousing justice without indignation. I never knew his temper ruffled, even by an editor, and no contributor or printer could disturb his equanimity. To the last he maintained the complexion and calm-eyed innocence of a child, sitting always ready to smile, though for many years afflicted by some insidious illness which he most heroically concealed from us until it utterly crippled him beyond the help even of Christian Science, to which he turned, finding peace in it rather than health. It was he who introduced me to the large but carefully-selected Meynell circle, so gracious in their free refinement, and to Evelyn Sharp, fresh from the staff of the " Yellow Book," most unmistakable of writers, always equally ready with her penetrating simplicity, her sympathetic wit, and indignant pathos. Florence Farr must have begun to write for me about the same time. She was best known, I suppose, for her exquisite voice—a speaking voice of a beauty hardly ever surpassed—and for her recitation in a kind of modulated chant to the zither or lyre, under the direction of William Yeats. But she had also a strangely spiritual side to her nature, driving her to study, almost seriously, the ancient religions of Egypt and India. Her enthusiasm in these obscure pursuits often astonished me, all the more

when at last, to London's loss, it urged her to retirement among the Buddhists of Ceylon and a search for tranquil meditation that never came. For, working as a teacher in a girls' school there, and not allowed, as she sorrowfully wrote to me, even to wear the native dress, she died after a few years, and that incomparable voice was still.

One evening after my first return from the Boer War, a person of unknown name was announced, as many such there were, and, cursing aloud or silently, I awaited his entrance. Can a man stride with a proud and melancholy shyness? If so, he strode in that manner. He was tall, absurdly thin, and a face of attractive distinction and ultra-refinement was sicklied over with nervous melancholy and the ill condition of bad food or hunger. Almost too shy to speak, he sat down proudly and asked if I could give him work. I enquired what work he could do, and he said "None." At once recognising my former self in him, I asked whether he would like some reviewing on any subject, and on what. He replied that he knew nothing of any subject, and was quite sure he could not write, but certainly he did want work of some sort. I asked if he would not care to try a short review of a scholarly book I was just throwing away; for if he could not do it, that would make little difference to me or to anyone else. I urged him repeatedly, and at last, with extreme reluctance, he consented, and nervously took his leave, just mentioning that his name was Edward Thomas, lately from Lincoln College, Oxford, and now living in Lavender Hill, Nightingale Lane, Rosemary Cottage, or some such address (for I used afterwards to tell him he chose his wandering homes simply for their pretty names). Of course, at once he became one of my very best reviewers, and soon one of my closest friends. Shy and reserved of feeling he always remained; too self-distrustful till nearly the end. Once after visiting him in his home near Petersfield, I told him I was sure he could and did write admirable verse. He answered that he never had and never would. But yet, what fine verse he has written! When last

I saw him, only for a moment, during the war, he was in uniform, and had gained incredibly in health and stature and confidence. Very soon afterwards I heard he had been killed at an Observation Post in France. In him also, as in so many of my friends, the war extinguished a nature of singular beauty and power. Early in our friendship, I induced him to write the text for John Fulleylove's pictures of Oxford, and his is the best account of Oxford life ever written. Rather later he dedicated to me his book called "The Heart of England," and I am glad to remember that.

In these memories I must have left out a good many contributors, some of whom, I admit, were thrust upon me and were often so bad that it was less trouble to rewrite the whole of their reviews than to correct them as one corrects a child's mistakes. But I should mention J. H. Morgan, afterwards a barrister distinguished for courage in defence of my friend Roger Casement at the State Trial. He was a Balliol Scholar in history, had a wide knowledge of his subject, and was a good writer too when one could get him to start writing. But for that we had to lock him in a solitary room and starve him out. I used to write a terrible lot of the reviews myself also, and though I devoted a great deal of zeal to "the Page," I was leader-writer too. I kept up the drill of my Company beside Shadwell Basin till the South African War came, and I was repeatedly sent away upon some mission or another; as once to Maidstone to investigate an outbreak of typhoid among the hoppers and townspeople. There I met a Dr. Wright (I believe the famous Sir Almroth of later years), who had come specially to save the inhabitants by his Anti-Typhoid Inoculation, but found them anxious indeed to live, but not to be saved. For hardly one would submit to a treatment that in a year or two was to preserve many lives in South Africa, as the inoculators claimed. Once I was sent to witness the Boat Race from the Press boat; once to describe some big cricket match at the Oval, under the direction of John Burns, who

stood beside me loudly criticising every ball and every stroke or bit of fielding, and rapturously applauding with his great hairy hands, while the long, grizzled hair on his chest curled out high above his collar. Once while I was waiting to give evidence in a libel case into which I had dropped the paper by describing in what appeared to me fitting language the treatment of young boys in some Institution (we lost the case, for the jury considered my condemnation excessive) —whilst I was waiting, I heard Dr. Jameson give evidence on the Raid (May 10, 1899). In my diary I described him as “a round-headed, short man, with a rather despairing and even nervous look. He kept rubbing his hand over his face and then looking up to the ceiling ; said quite simply he knew his action in the Raid was illegal, but also knew he would be forgiven, if successful.”

In the late summer of 1898, as I had missed the Soudan owing to Charlie Williams’ entreaty to be sent in spite of his age, I was ordered to follow the great manœuvres in Wiltshire, I suppose the biggest manœuvres ever held on the old style of warfare. There for the first time I met Lord Roberts, who encouraged me with his usual courtesy, and in my diary I have another entry of some interest now : “August 18 : Early to Headquarters office (Aldershot). Saw a rather surly little bull-dog, a Colonel Plumer, who was only anxious to tell me nothing,” he, I suppose, being the redoubtable General Plumer of the 2nd Army, fifteen years later. On September 4th they fired a lot of guns to celebrate the fall of Khartoum, but what interested me most on the manœuvres, and what proved most important in the following year, was that the Duke of Connaught, being matched against Buller for a long campaign of successive field-days, completely out-generaled him, contrary to all expectation, and would have wiped his army off the field in actual war.

But two or three far more important tasks were allotted me in those two happy years while the “Chronicle” was still a paper of light and we were all serving its editor with



the enthusiasm that raises journalism to the level of a Church or Sacred Order. Early in 1898 the misgovernment of Cuba and other Spanish possessions, especially under Governor Weyler, "the Tiger," was arousing in the United States an indignation which may have been mixed with other motives but was certainly in part genuine. The sinking of the "Maine," either by secret attack or internal combustion as she lay in Havana Harbour made war certain, and I began preparations for America. But here, as in the case of the Soudan later in the same year, I was frustrated. Maurice Lowe was then the "Chronicle" correspondent in the States, and because he was on the spot and intimate with the American nature, he was appointed for the war. When I came to know him personally at the Washington Conference of 1921, I understood that the appointment was excellent, but at the time it seemed bitter, for I was to be sent only to Spain, where action was very unlikely. I do not regret it now, for I have been given only one other opportunity of learning something about Spain (during the insurrection at Barcelona and the Morocco campaign of 1909). And in Spain there always lurks a melancholy but persuasive fascination.

My three months there were far from pleasurable. From time to time the authorities realised that their country was at war, and even the common people remembered it too. For as the exchange-value of the peseta fell, prices went up, and small riots occurred at various places, especially in the mining districts. At some of the ports, and even in the larger cities, one observed wretched bands of young men, dressed in little caps and striped uniforms of thickish twill, saying good-bye and setting out for a deadly climate and a deadly war in a cause that meant nothing to them or their parents and lovers. Sometimes the Queen-Mother Christina ("The Austrian," as they called her) would make an appeal at a bazaar, or appear in a theatre amid perfunctory applause, or would drive around Madrid with her sad-looking boy Alfonso at her side, and the passers-by would regard them

without favour, shake their heads and say, "He is sure to die before he comes of age!"—one of those medical prophecies that are not fulfilled. But the Royal Family, the Government, and the war received no blessings. Public indifference regarded them all as unwelcome interruptions to the ordinary life of easy-going labour, rendered endurable by the joy of Sundays when six bulls were killed, or of Saints' Days when the slaughter ran to twelve in honour of the Sacred Festival and the holy person commemorated. The flesh of bulls thus dedicated to divine service was generally sold to the poor, but, as I was told, it was not highly appreciated, because the terror or rage of the bull before its skilful execution instilled a poison into its blood which induced madness in those who consumed the meat. Not caring to vomit in public, I refused all invitations to the bull-fights myself, even upon the most frequented Holy Days; but Pierre Loti, who was in Madrid at the same time, did go and he wrote an admirable essay upon the scene, speaking as it were through the mouth of a wretched old horse who had trusted man for feeding him and treating him fairly well, but now found himself betrayed, ripped open by the bull's horns so that his bowels gushed out and had to be snipt off with scissors in order that he might stagger about a little longer without tripping over them.

But while these amusements entertained the public mind, the Government at intervals became conscious of the disastrous war across the ocean, and for the first few days, or even weeks, they remained watchful. I had to take my telegrams to an office called "The Black Cabinet," as in a melodrama, and there they usually remained, though posted letters got through. I was "shadowed" wherever I went, unless I contrived to jump off my shadow—not a very difficult achievement, for he could seldom resist the temptation of sitting to drink in the shade. As I spoke little Spanish, and few could discern the difference between English and American, all regarded me as a spy, and indeed I felt like one. For my first command was to discover, if

possible, where the rest of the Spanish Fleet that had not started to its destruction in Cuba might be, especially one great battleship called the "Pelago." Within a week of my arrival in Madrid I set off to Cadiz, shadowed as usual. Hiring a little sailing boat, I steered out over the lovely harbour into which Drake once sailed with fire in his belly, then to an inner harbour, and then to a third, and there lay the glorious "Pelago," all too valuable a ship to be sent to war with the risk of loss. She was being polished up as though for sea ; but in fact she remained there till near the end of the war, when she started east down the Mediterranean, perhaps vaguely making for the Philippines. She was stopped at Port Said, and being refused coal, returned home in perfect security, perhaps surviving as a veteran to this day.

Under similar orders, I visited other ports, such as Barcelona (where I discovered an old battleship called the "Numancia" being painted as though for war), and Cartagena, where I discovered nothing but a few fresh batteries, apparently being built to resist an expected invasion that never came. On a different line of interest, I discovered the lead and silver miners of the district called La Union, toiling in extreme wretchedness for 1s. 9d. or 2s. a day (English value). The whole business was expounded to me by two Scots who were managing the mines, and who strongly advised me to get away as soon as possible owing to the turbulent nature of their people ; for all of them carried the fish-shaped Toledo knife and had no hesitation about using it upon strangers. Indeed, all through my months in Spain that knife appeared from time to time, usually revealed with threats under the shelter of a coat. But next minute the temporary assassin had forgotten all about it and about me, just as everyone forgot about the war except for a minute or two in the evening when the newsboys rushed screaming through the streets.

With Barcelona I was to become more closely acquainted eleven years later (1909), when I crept in a little boat along

the coast from Marseilles, hidden in a cargo of eggs, and found the city blazing in various parts, especially where monasteries and convents stood ; for all was in revolution—the attempted social revolution that led to the shameful execution of Francisco Ferrer.<sup>1</sup> But on that first visit also I had to explore the terrible fortress-dungeon of Montjuich so far as I could get without being shot by the sentries. For in the cells of that dungeon some of my Spanish revolutionary friends in London had been put to tortures of atrocious cruelty and filthy indecency—abominations that the “Chronicle” had exposed. What more I remember of Barcelona on that first visit is chiefly my admission into an enthusiastic group of Catalan painters, who followed the Parisian style of Impressionist art, then still surviving. And I remember long wanderings through the workers’ quarter of Barceloneta, across the harbour east. There, in the church called “St. Michael of This Port” I saw a large crucifix lying prone against the altar rails while crowds knelt around it in worship ; perhaps all the more fervent because the Christ wore long, brown, woman’s hair streaming to the loin-cloth.

Cordova and other famous cities I visited as a tourist in passing. At Seville I had the advantage of witnessing the immense procession on Corpus Christi Day, when vast silver shrines—old silver that began to bring ruin on Spain four centuries ago—are borne through streets strewn with myrtle and sprinkled with fresh water ; and when, afterwards, ten chosen boys, dressed in yellow silk raiment of the seventeenth century, perform a traditional dance before the very altar of the great cathedral. At Toledo, more perhaps than elsewhere, I realised the sad solemnity of Spain, as of an ageing woman once so beautiful—such sadness as even El Greco in his day perceived and revealed in his picture of the city, now unhappily in New York. As I stood watching the red-brown stream of the Tagus rushing in a horseshoe

<sup>1</sup> See the excellent example of investigation called “The Life, Trial, and Death of Francisco Ferrer,” by William Archer,



round the city, between rocks bare down to the water's edge as in a romantic fairyland, I met James Fulton, an architectural but artistic draughtsman of exquisite skill, who had gained a three months' travelling scholarship in Glasgow, but, in Scottish fashion, was extending the time to six months by living on beans and scraps of crust. Afterwards he did some excellent drawings for us on the "Chronicle," but I lost sight of him about twenty years ago. I visited Tangier also, crossing the strait from Algeciras, and as this was my first sight of an eastern or African town, it is amusing to recall the points I noted down at the time :

"Here I found a collection of variegated scoundrelism : Moors in dirty white blankets, black Berbers and Nubians, long-haired savages with shells round their heads, the worst scourings and rinsings of Spain, grotesque beggars, holy men prostrating themselves in perpetual motion to the name of Allah, old prophets armed with ancient spears and pronged tridents, women swaddled up and biting the end of their blankets or the ends of their fingers for a veil, lean camels, endless cattle, and 'scorpions' from the Rock. Went to a Moorish café and heard five men make ruthless music and song. Was offered the sight of a 'belly-dance' (so much for a woman if half naked, and so much more if entirely naked), but very reluctantly refused, being in love. Saw the palace, and the prison where 260 savages of various kinds sprawled about on the dust in helpless swiftness, stretching their brown hands out through the bars into the street for coins or cigarettes. Saw the long-handled sickles for reaping heads in the prison court. Also the numerous schools, where all the little boys were squatting on the ground and reciting the Koran, swinging their bodies perpetually backwards and forwards, the teacher reciting with them, in the same athletic manner."

But these were only travellers' joys. What I regarded as my chief service to the paper was a visit to Ceuta on the African coast opposite Gibraltar. In those days the effective range of big guns was rapidly increasing, and Gibson Bowles had been denouncing Gibraltar, in his

vehement fashion, as an unsafe anchorage for our fleet or any other ships. The roadstead, sheltered by breakwaters and moles on the west side of the Rock, was already, he maintained, commanded by guns from Algeciras and from the hill to the north-west on Spanish territory called "The Queen of Spain's Chair." Undoubtedly he was right, for I rode out to the hill and round by San Roque village (where boys stoned us) with Major Fletcher, a gunner, stationed at the Gibraltar Headquarters, who was able to estimate the range. But if Gibraltar was useless, what was to be done to secure our command of the entrance to the ancient sea? I went to the east side of the Rock, as there was some idea of making a harbour there, since it would be out of range from any gun. But the cliff on that side sinks so sheer into the sea, and the depth of the water right up to the rock is so great that no shelter could be constructed there except at incalculable expense. How then, some critics suggested, if we could contrive an exchange, giving Gibraltar back to Spain and taking Ceuta in its stead? To form what opinion I could upon this proposal, I sailed over from Algeciras in a little boat that took nearly three hours to cross.

I had with me Wilfred Pollock, an old acquaintance, at that time correspondent for the "Daily Mail." He was a random, dare-devil, pleasant, and clever fellow, possessing a lot of curious knowledge, and far more interested in old Spanish lustre-ware and fans than in the Spanish-American War. Unfortunately he had been in India, and there had acquired the frequent habit of claiming the privileges of a British "Sahib" and regarding the rest of the world as "natives." The result was that, at a time when suspicion ran strong, he repeatedly gave offence to the proud and courteous people of Spain, and one day when we had cycled from Algeciras to Tarifa, I had great trouble in "cutting him out" from a crowd infuriated by his lofty scorn. I could not have invited a more hazardous companion for the investigation of Ceuta, probably the most powerful of

Spanish fortresses, and at that time further strengthened in fear of the imaginary invasion from America. We strolled about innocently for a while, my object being to get off the small fortified peninsula and view the situation from the surrounding neighbourhood. But at every point a sentry warned us back. A policeman and a soldier followed us everywhere, and at last, while we contemplated an ancient moat, we were seized and marched down the main street under arrest. It so happened that the only inhabitants of Ceuta, except the soldiers, were convicted murderers, who were given more freedom than our convicts, being allowed to work for wages and even to have their families with them if they liked. Naturally, they gathered in joyful excitement at seeing two foreigners carried off to the Commandant's Headquarters, probably to be shot as spies. Here were criminals more guilty than themselves, and in greater danger of execution than even they had been. But to my surprise they contented themselves with flinging a few stones and pouring out the sarcastic raillery of which Spaniards are masters. After being kept for a long time in a hungry cell, we were ushered into the presence, and the Commandant informed us he had no doubt we were military officers and American spies, for his agents had described us as looking only at fortifications. We must therefore be prepared to pay the extreme penalty. I stated our case as well as I could in my execrable French, and asked that a telegram should be sent to the Governor of Gibraltar, upon whom I had taken the precaution of calling. I think that was done. An endless discussion followed. Officers ran in and out with great excitement, arranging the firing-party, as I supposed. Happily, an old Spanish officer was present who spoke a little English and said he had seen me in Gibraltar. Whether for that very inconclusive reason or because a telegram arrived from the Governor, we were finally ordered to leave Ceuta at once, our friendly officer even making some apology, "because you see, we are at war." To which Pollock, raising his voice so that all might hear, replied :

"I know that, but you are the only Spaniard I have met who does!"<sup>1</sup>

As we were marched down to the boat, accompanied by a small crowd of ex-murderers, one of the convicts secretly thrust a dirty little note into my hand. It was from a convict named Clement, saying that he recognised me as a compatriot and would I kindly give him some tobacco? Being surrounded by the guard, I could not give it at once, but I sent some from Gibraltar, and I can only hope he received it, though I learnt that he was serving a life-sentence for having murdered his Spanish wife with unusual atrocity.

Some weeks later I was recalled, and had an easy journey, for Drummond Wolff, then our Ambassador in Madrid, asked me to carry his despatches because the post was so unsafe that he usually had to send them by courier to Gibraltar to meet a ship homeward bound. The question of exchanging Gibraltar for Ceuta has never been settled, chiefly, I suppose, because it would cost a lot to convert Ceuta into a fortress fit to command the Straits; or because we have spent so much on Gibraltar that we imagine it must necessarily be of some use; or, finally, because the Rock looks so romantic, so imposing, and we always hope that Spain will remain neutral or allied. Since those distant days I have thought of Spain with a peculiar affection—a sense of gaiety, satire, and pathos mingled. It so happened that the supreme violinist, Sarasate, occupied the next room to mine at the "Hotel Roma" in Madrid. In grief at the succession of disasters in the war, he refused to appear at any public concert, but sometimes late at night I would hear him playing quietly to himself, and the music seemed to overflow with sorrow. Perhaps, however, that idea was only an example of the "pathetic fallacy."

<sup>1</sup> Wilfred Pollock was recalled before I left Spain, and I think I never saw him again. For, abandoning journalism, he ran a touring company of players in the provinces, and died in an asylum, his mind, never very accurately balanced, being finally upset by the idiosyncrasies of the actresses.



In the following spring (1899) I was in Ireland for the second time, and I have visited that holy and unquiet land so often since then that it is hard to avoid confusion of impression, if not of events. The editor sent me to discover, if possible, the truth about a rather serious riot in which Michael Davitt had been stoned at Charleville on the border of Counties Limerick and Cork. Since his release from long imprisonment in Portland I had heard Davitt speak twice in London, and he had won from me, as from others, an admiration that only increased as I came to know him in later years. It was on this journey that I first became acquainted with the group of varied and lovable people, partly literary, partly political, who have given a grace and poignant interest to Dublin life such as I have found in no other city. This incalculable advantage is partly due to the measurable size of Dublin, allowing a close and frequent intercourse between friends, and a rapid estimation of enemies. But chiefly it is due to the common purpose that unites all hearts and minds in spite of violent and often blood-thirsty divergence of opinion—so violent that I have heard one true patriot describe another true patriot as a barbaric and irredeemable scoundrel because he refused to agree upon some minor clause in a Land Act.

Through C. H. Oldham, whose Home Rule principles had cost him an important position in Trinity College, I was introduced to the Contemporary Club, which then met every week in his rooms opposite Trinity College for a free discussion of politics and literature. There I became acquainted with Dr. George Sigerson, scholar, historian, collector of the arts, doctor of the poor, and father of a woman poet. He sat usually silent, his mind working slowly, as it seemed through old age, though he could not then have been old, for he is still living (1923) as a Senator in the Free State. And I met John F. Taylor, cleverest of all, though never successful. Bitter of tongue he was, a master of sarcasm, passionately eloquent, I was told, when deeply stirred by another's wrong; formidable in his silence and in his rare but keen remarks

that cut through comfortable theorising as a thin string cuts through cheese. And there was Oldham himself, exuberant, dogmatic, learned, a trustworthy source of knowledge and rather inclined to moderation, boasting himself English, and talking with a brogue thick as a turf bog ; endlessly hospitable and kindly, while with loud denunciations he allayed personal strife. I suppose it must have been a year or two later that I met Sheehy Skeffington, fearless, true-hearted, going alone like the cat, his hand against every man, sharply contradictory, champion of women, a violent pacifist, unpopular and universally beloved. If I met him then, as I met him so often and always with such delight afterwards, he had still seventeen years of life to run before a British Officer murdered him in a frenzy of religious or homicidal madness. It must have been later, too, that I met Tom Kettle at the Contemporary—Skeffington's brother by marriage, but of very different nature, so genial, pliable (only too pliable, too genial, it was said), a born orator, and perhaps with cleverer brain even than J. F. Taylor's, being constructive as well as fervid. I think the last time I heard him at the Club was just after Winston Churchill's speech at the Celtic Football Ground in Belfast (February, 1912). I remember he discussed the possibility of avoiding partition and of ensuring peace in years to come ; of which years he was to see but few before death found him fighting in France "for the rights of small nationalities"—as the deceptive phrase coined by our political coiners then ran.

T. P. Gill, then editor of Horace Plunkett's paper, the "Daily Express," was also at the Contemporary at that time, and in my diary I describe him, not unfairly, as "very exquisite in dress, manner, and appearance ; a refined and fastidious face ; careful fair beard and moustache ; hair thickish at the back, but no back to his head ; very fluent and plausible, with deprecating hand." But why continue ? George Moore in "Ave" has painted of Gill the most cruelly malicious portrait or caricature in all literature—how cruel I have learnt since I noted down my own first impression.

Indeed, George Moore's portraits of the Dublin society that I was then just beginning to know could not be surpassed either for wit or malignity. I think George Russell ("A.E.") is the only notable person in that circle whom George Moore treats without that deflating touch of cruelty, though in one or two other cases he tortures his victim as though he loved him, or her. But it was not till four or five years later that I became acquainted with the intellectual power and irresistibly attractive personality of George Russell, to whose greeting I have since always looked forward as the greatest joy that awaited me even in Ireland.

But, after all, there were two figures in those early days at the Contemporary which held my attention most closely. One was that John O'Leary whom I had known in exile twenty-two years before in Paris. Now I found him little changed in appearance, though wasted almost to extremity. His mind was alert (when I met him in later years it had become confused and clouded), but he was inclined to prose and meander on himself. He still believed in nothing but force, though by force he meant little more than making things as unpleasant as possible for the British Government. Though respected for his past, he was evidently regarded in the Club as rather a bore, and there was a sense of relief when he withdrew early. The picture of old Muirish drawn by Daniel Corkery in "The Hounds of Banba" always reminds me of John O'Leary; for his friends spoke of Muirish too as never changing: "always the same cross-grained, cranky old Fenian. 'We were only play-actors,' he said." Better still, one thinks of Yeats's poem called "September, 1913," the year of old O'Leary's death, and especially of the verse:

*" Was it for this the wild geese spread  
The grey wing upon every tide ;  
For this that all that blood was shed,  
For this Edward Fitzgerald died,  
And Robert Emmet and Wolfe Tone,  
All that delirium of the brave ;  
Romantic Ireland's dead and gone,  
It's with O'Leary in the grave."*



JOHN O'LEARY, THE FENIAN  
*From a Drawing by the Author*





The poet's lamentation was premature, as he himself admitted in a subsequent note to the poem, but as I looked at O'Leary sitting there among us, muttering of strange old things, I felt as when one suddenly comes upon a cromlech standing in a grouse-moor, or on Stonehenge in the middle of British cavalry-mancœuvres.

Yeats was not living in Ireland in those days, but I had met him for the first time a few weeks before at the Podmores' house, and had thus noted his appearance :

"Tall, thin, rather stooping ; with long, straight-topped head, quite black ; dressed in blue-black, with a huge black bow for tie ; ' to match my hair and my boots,' as he once answered to a question why ; rather narrow face, with eyes rather close, and the left eye looking a little outwards ; clean-shaved, showing blue-black to match his suit ; very much the poet all through his nature ; talked well and incessantly, moving his hands a good deal, and sometimes falling into a natural chant ; says ' D'y' see ? ' to every sentence ; talked chiefly of himself, his spiritual experiences, trances, visions, and apparitions ; sometimes, he said, the spirit forbids him to say what was in his mind, and then his tongue becomes like a stone ; calls himself a Cabbalist, but a sceptic too ; is as good a typical young poet as could come out of Ireland ; has laughter too, especially in gossip about other men. Later at night I met him in the street, and talked Irish politics (he pays no attention to any other) up and down the roads till late."

That does fairly well for a first glance, but I did not fully appreciate the genius or the charming nature of that exquisite poet till a later time, when, partly as relief from my position under a hostile editor, to whom I was opposed upon every subject, I used to attend his evening discussions on poetic and other arts in his attic room near St. Pancras Church ; and I should have continued to attend them with great pleasure and advantage but for the persistent presence of the most inflexible bore that ever oppressed the Atlantic in his passage.

With Yeats one naturally associated the name of Maud

Gonne in those days, for in the previous year they had made a progress through Ireland together, holding meetings to commemorate the Rebellion of 'Ninety-eight. She too came to the Contemporary, and I, like everyone else but John F. Taylor, was overwhelmed by her beauty. It was indeed amazing. At the first sight of her I held my breath in adoration. Tall she was, and exquisitely formed; the loveliest hair and face that ever the sun shone on. Exquisitely dressed besides—too exquisitely dressed Peter Taylor kept snarling to me when we were alone, for he was a stern and rigid man. In my first note of her I say “not overwhelmingly clever nor at all ‘smart,’ ” and that description remains true, nor does anyone regret the absence of cleverness and smartness in that indignant and passionately sympathetic heart. One thing further I noticed: at the Club she sat long silent, perhaps bored by the political conversation, perhaps thinking of Paris from which she had just arrived. But when the others began asking me questions about the Greek War and fighting, at once she roused herself and became eager, listening and asking questions with the rest. Then I saw the meaning of that strong and beautiful chin. I knew that her longing was for action in place of all the theorising and talk, so general in Dublin; and then, as though by some prophetic insight, I foresaw the kind of marriage she would certainly make. “The first man of action,” I said to myself,—“the first man of resolute action whom she meets will have her at his mercy.” So it happened, and I was not in the least surprised when she married the MacBride who commanded the Irish Brigade against the British in the Boer War, and was in the end executed for the Easter Week of 1916, after what, I suppose, was to her the misery of many intervening years. But at my first meeting with her she was lovely beyond compare. All night we would sit up waiting to see her arrive by the morning train. All night we would sit up conversing, if she were there, that we might see her home with the milk. Truly did the poet sing of her or of some

lovely vision (for no one else but a vision was ever so beautiful) :

*“ I thought of your beauty and this arrow  
Made out of a wild thought is in my marrow.  
There’s no man may look upon her, no man,  
As when newly grown to be a woman,  
Blossom pale, she pulled down the pale blossom  
At the moth hour and hid it in her bosom.”*

And now, after all these years, every time that her gracious presence enters, or I see her in a crowded room or on a crowded road, so distinctive, so incomparable, I think of the poet’s other lines :

*“ Time can but make her beauty over again  
Because of that great nobleness of hers ;  
The fire that stirs about her, when she stirs  
Burns but more clearly ; O, she had not these ways,  
When all the wild summer was in her gaze.  
O heart, O heart, if she’d but turn her head,  
You’d know the folly of being comforted.”*

I do not clearly remember the details of the Charleville riot which I was to investigate, connected, no doubt, with the United Irish League, founded by William O’Brien in the previous year. But after visiting Charleville and scouring around to collect what evidence I could, I went on to Limerick, where I found the children preparing bonfires for the 1st of April, so as to “burn away the fairies, who else would turn you into a small little man or a small little woman.” I went to Killaloe and walked up the beautiful shore of Loch Derg almost to Scariiff in drenching rain, against which the keeper of a small general store lent me his fine blue coat, remarking, “Now you look like a real gentleman for once !” And he let me go off in it, though he had no assurance in the world that I should send it back, and his remark was evidence how much he valued the symbol of respectability. A friend of his had “found a gold mine,” and brought it too for me to see, clutched tight in his hand. It was a tiny scrap of copper ore ; but not



trusting my opinion, nor even the assured judgment of a School-of-Mines man from Dublin, he was sending it to a Limerick "jooler" to be tested. Similarly on Achill, a few days later I met a boy who had "found a diamond mine," and produced from some recess of his tattered shirt a few bits of purple spar, which he parted with far below their value as diamonds.

Limerick, Killaloe, Scariff—how different to me are their associations now ! Limerick, where the Lord Mayor O'Callaghan, whom I knew, was murdered over the shoulder of his beautiful and intellectual wife ; Killaloe where the night before I arrived (November 18, 1920) four youths had been murdered by the British while crossing the bridge as prisoners ; Scariff where I saw their bodies laid out in the chapel ; and Raheen close by, where I said good-bye to Edward Lysaght as he started one morning in his motor for Dublin, having at his side the scholar and assistant in his farm, young Clune, to be murdered three days later in Dublin Castle. But those associations belong to the winter of the Black-and-Tan Terror, and my memories of 1899 are very different. In Limerick they call up chiefly the figure of John Daly, inevitably elected Mayor because he had lately emerged from an imprisonment of thirteen and a half years in Portland for treason-felony, and was a remarkable man besides. Tall and thin he was, his skin withered, the yellow of imprisonment still evident upon it ; nearly bald and his black beard silvered, but the eyes still bright blue ; the face refined but sane ; his natural sweetness still preserved ; his temper not irritable nor soured at all. He told me much of his prison life, of his refusal to report himself as a Ticket-of-Leave man, and of his various work as Mayor. "A fine and interesting man, just able to listen, which is so rare," I summed him up, and I noted how excited and adoring all the pretty girls in the great Cleaves Creamery were at the very sight of him when we visited it together ; though they, poor things ! were working for an average of

four-and-six a week. It was his niece whom I knew in Limerick during the Terror of 1920, when her bakery was destroyed, her hair hacked off, and her hand slit open with a razor from top to bottom between the fingers.

Proceeding to Castlebar to learn something of a congested District and the "striping" of the land, I was welcomed at the station by an excited crowd of patriots, who all insisted on shaking hands with me. I could not imagine why. One of them shouted in my ear, "I have long heard of your eloquence!" and as I dislike eloquence, never having possessed the smallest touch of it, I perceived there must be some mistake. So there was. They were expecting a Member of Parliament named Condon, and as I was a stranger they naturally supposed me to be their Member. However, a local man of affairs, James Daly, received me with almost equal enthusiasm, showed me the congested District and "striped" land, showed me where the French cavalry a century before had chased the British to Athlone in the "Castlebar Races," and, above all in interest to myself, showed me Mount Nephin or Nevin, scene of a beautiful old Irish ballad, and, as I vainly imagine, of my own birth many centuries ago. Next day being Sunday, there arrived Mr. Condon, M.P., with Haviland Burke, whom I had met in Athens after his return from Actium, where he had composedly watched the Preveza guns firing throughout the war. And in the afternoon they held a meeting in an open street near a bridge, upon which a body of police stood in close formation with rifles and batons ready. Haviland Burke opened the proceedings by shouting that if there was murder that day it would be the fault of the police. This statement appeared to irritate rather than conciliate that body. For the next moment they drew their batons and charged straight down the road, cracking almost every head within reach. But by standing perfectly still in the middle of the road, I escaped without a single blow, and since that time I have adopted those tactics usually with complete success in every "discrepancy with the police" (as our

Londoners call it). When the police had returned, panting and excited, the meeting proceeded without further interruption except eggs and stones. One boy was seriously hurt in the charge, but the ebullition seemed to be recognised as the due and proper beginning of a public meeting, like our Chairman's invitation : " I will now call upon Mr. Smith to say a few words to us upon this most vital, and I may say, important subject."

On Achill I reached the furthest west point that it is possible to reach except in Kerry. Upon my way I found all the people out in the wet fields putting in potato " splits " and just covering them up in wet earth mixed with seaweed. The women were all wearing the deep red petticoats they weave in winter, and dye also with seaweed. Many men were riding thin horses, with their wives behind them, though most of the women were very large, strong, and of great breadth ; red-faced, chiefly barefoot. The villages seemed horribly poor and dirty ; the cabins crowded together, with brown thatch, often wattled over. The number of animals issuing from each cabin at dawn was startling. But they were useful, necessary animals, not like most of our indoor pets. Passing Keel and a largish village next to the head, I came, two miles further on, to an open green pasture round the ruins of the house where Captain Boycott lived before his name went round the world. A cross upon a heap of stones marked the place. A young married woman, who had lived long in Clare Island, came up there to look after the lambs and lead them home, to prevent the foxes getting them. After climbing a long, wet hillside of grass and bog, I reached the furthest edge overhanging the sea. There the wind was so wild I could not stand, but had to creep on all fours. It struck and beat against the rocks with loud thuds, or with screams as though a woman were calling. From the noise one would think it was pulling up the heather by the roots. I could see it passing along the grass at my side, turning it suddenly white. There for a long time I lay flat, while the wind stormed over me, causing a kind of fear, as

though the cliffs and all the hills might collapse into the sea below. Crawling then to the very highest point, I looked over the edge again and there the wind was still more terrific. Gleams of silver ran across the sea, and rain was driving up. Once a whirlwind caught up the surface into a tall water-spout, as I had seen on the Gulf of Actium.

On my way back I found the boy, James O'Malley, working at his "diamond mine," the fragments of purple spar lying plentifully about him. He told me that the year before a boy while minding sheep had been blown over the cliff and was "broken." He himself still went to school and learnt writing and reading, but didn't care much for books because "there was nothing but reading in them." He knew little Irish, and thought little of fairies, but was much excited at sight of a keg dashing about upon the waves. There was so much turf on the island, he told me, that people did not take the trouble to gather the heaps of wreckage on the shore. His father had died while harvesting in Scotland, and three girl-cousins were drowned in the boat that was wrecked off Westport with thirty other girls, all on their way to the Scottish harvesting. As I turned reluctantly east—always reluctantly east—I heard the men and women on their bits of field saying, "Praise be to God and the Blessed Woman!" "God give us his blessing!" "And He will," or "God bless your work!" "And you." So with those unwonted sounds in my ears, I was obliged to set my face toward England, leaving that lost Paradise of the west, but uncertain at heart whether I should wish it to be regained.



## CHAPTER XI

### LADYSMITH

*“ To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow.”*

**B**UT in that year, 1899, two main problems were occupying thoughtful and even thoughtless minds in England and France. The first was the Dreyfus Case. Nearly all English people had a strong opinion about it, one way or other, being guided almost entirely by hatred of the Jews, esteem for the Jews, or indifference to the Jews. The affair had become so complicated that few of us had the patience or the knowledge to disentangle its threads. In that atmosphere of suspicion and lying, strange figures kept appearing and disappearing like ghosts and goblins in a Witches' Sabbath. We wandered about, lost in perplexity as in Satan's Invisible World Revealed. For, indeed, the darkness was hardly visible, and it seemed incredible that even Anti-Jewish passion could have concocted or accepted such evidence without stronger evidence somewhere hidden behind it. So far as I know, the Oxford scholar, F. C. Conybeare, was the only one among us who made his way step by step through that haunted labyrinth, and guided others to the centre. But my editor studied the subject pretty closely, and I remember the day when in the editor's office Esterhazy, raising both hands to heaven, exclaimed, "I wrote the *bordereau* ! I swear it before God !" Unhappily Esterhazy was by that time so discredited that God and man took small account of his oath, and we soon found that, as this was his last chance of selling his soul, he had taken the golden opportunity of selling it to us and the "Times" on the same day. In fact by that time, the whole Affair was nearing its end—its real end at Rennes, but as some violent

outburst seemed likely in Paris before the beginning of the end, the editor sent me over there to watch events, because old Millage, our regular correspondent, was ill.

The siege of Guérin and the Anti-Juifs at the house in Rue de Chabrol known as the "Fort Chabrol," was at its height. Day and night I kept watch at one end of that little street or the other, in expectation of the surrender. For the garrison was known to be short of food, and though we contrived to frighten a hen into flying over the walls as some relief, that provision could not last long among a body of desperate men, however deeply inspired by hatred of the Chosen People. One night there was a rumour that the market women and fish-wives—"Les Dames des Halles"—had resolved to storm the street and release the Gentile heroes. But the neighbouring squares were suddenly filled with mounted men in the uniform of Napoleon's Old Guard, and the enthusiasm of the Dames could not face those shining breastplates and horsehair plumes hanging from the helmets down to the saddles behind. So while I was there the siege was maintained without event beyond the fortuitous flight of the hen; for it was one of those difficult cases in which authority is defied but dares not take the extreme step of bloodshed. In the brief intervals of my vigil, I made the acquaintance of some distinguished politicians on the Liberal side, such as Pressensé and Yves Guyot, besides Jean Graves, a very charming and honourable Anarchist, with straight, soft eyes, like a seal's, and living in an attic of the Latin Quarter.

But I had been in Paris hardly over a week when I was suddenly recalled for the second issue that I mentioned—an issue of far graver consequences for England. Ever since the criminal error of the Jameson Raid and the subsequent collapse of the "No-Enquiry" Commission, which thickened with natural suspicions the noisome air of corruption and greed surrounding the gold speculation in South Africa, the British relations with the Transvaal had become more and more strained. Hope of peace revived

when Milner was sent out as High Commissioner to the Cape early in 1897, for his personal honour was above suspicion, and in South Africa that was an almost incredible attribute. Perhaps owing to his German education as a boy, there was always something more mature about his nature than is usual in the products of our public schools. His speeches as President of the Oxford Union were as grave and statesman-like as any I have heard. As an undergraduate he was regarded with a certain reverence by Balliol men, who would proclaim to other colleges that "Milner was made of no common clay." But there was a tang in the Balliol air—perhaps it was Jowett's influence concentrated upon the aristocrats and "likely" young men—which conduced to Imperialism, though it called itself Liberal. When Milner stood as a Liberal for Harrow, I went out to canvass for him and did whatever I could, but when near the end of the South African War I reminded him of that contest, he only said rather sadly: "A good deal of water has passed under the bridge since then." And, indeed, a good deal had passed over him—including the waters of the Nile—and much of the Liberal tradition had been washed out in the twenty years since his Oxford days.

Throughout 1899, negotiations, conferences, offers of terms and withdrawals of terms, proposals for Uitlander franchise, and discussions as to the meaning or fact of British "suzerainty" with increasing enmity and suspicion on both sides, had precariously continued. All except those statesmen who peevishly complained that they could not see through boards and piano-cases, knew that Kruger was secretly arming, as well he might after the treacherous onslaught of the Raid. Those of us who contemplated the immense fortunes accumulated by the gold-mine owners, and appreciated their eagerness to clear out of Africa so soon as the accumulation was vast enough to dominate Park Lane, smiled when Milner described such enviable persons as "Helots." In his famous despatch of May 4th, 1899, he wrote ;

“The spectacle of thousands of British subjects kept permanently in the position of Helots, constantly chafing under undoubted grievancees, and calling vainly to Her Majesty’s Government for redress, does steadily undermine the influence and reputation of Great Britain and the respect for the British Government within the Queen’s dominions.”<sup>1</sup>

Under these conditions of exaggerated grievancees on the one side, purposely emphasised by the insatiable greed of the mine-owners, and on the other a natural suspicion and apprehension, combined with an insecure reliance upon foreign intervention, all the complicated negotiations were futile. The Bloemfontein conference broke down in June. Dr. Leyds, acting as emissary for the Transvaal in Europe, appears then to have telegraphed that one or other of the European Powers was bound to interfere ; and indeed there was ground for the expectation, not only owing to the Kaiser’s telegram of congratulation to Kruger after the defeat of the Raid—a telegram easily justified, though intensely irritating to British pride—but because the British course of action was detested in Germany and Holland, while France had been violently alienated from us by the Fashoda incident of the previous year. We now know, in fact, that it was only the Kaiser’s personal influence which prevented a German, and perhaps a general European movement in defence of the Republics. Under such conditions, the hope of peace gradually dwindled week by week, and while I was in Paris, Joseph Chamberlain delivered at Birmingham (August 26) what even E. T. Cook describes as “an injudicious speech.” Chamberlain said he

<sup>1</sup> The metaphor of the Helots in this connection was, however, first used by Mr. J. W. Leonard, Q.C., at a meeting of the Transvaal National Union on July 16th, 1894. See “Rights and Wrongs of the Transvaal War,” by E. T. Cook—an admirable exposition of the case from the Imperialist point of view, as was natural in a writer of such integrity and industry, a personal friend of Milner, and possessing very similar qualities. When he published the book (1902) he had lately been discharged from his position as editor of the “Daily News,” which had been acquired by opponents of the war.



“was loath to say much lest I do harm,” and Cook adds, “It was a pity that he said anything.”<sup>1</sup> What he said was :

“Mr. Kruger procrastinates in his replies. He dribbles out reforms like water from a squeezed sponge, and he either accompanies his offers with conditions which he knows to be impossible, or he refuses to allow us to make a satisfactory investigation of the nature and character of these reforms. . . . The issues of peace and war are in the hands of President Kruger and his advisers. Will he speak the necessary words ? The sands are running down in the glass. The situation is too fraught with danger ; it is too strained for any indefinite postponement.”

That speech was made on a Saturday, and on the Monday I was recalled from the siege of Fort Chabrol for events leading up to a far more terrible siege. Charles Williams introduced me to Evelyn Wood, who advised waiting a few days, but on September 8th the Cabinet decided to send out a brigade—a brigade !—and next day I sailed from Southampton, Massingham and Charles Williams seeing me off at Waterloo.

Besides the delight inseparable from a journey of that length, with new prospects of sky and sea and occasional glimpses of land, the voyage was chiefly memorable for acquaintanceships which afterwards ripened into friendships or enmities. We had a few distinguished Boers on board, and a few of the wealthy “Helots,” who behaved after their kind. But we had also Harry Pearse, war correspondent to the “Daily News,” described as “a born Field-Marshal” by a Tailors’ paper, which commented upon the dress of all correspondents (cruelly asserting that apparently I did not care a button what I had on). And Pearse, a tall and singularly handsome man, certainly did look the part. He was then nearly sixty, and had seen hard service, especially in Egypt, where he had survived the broken square at Abu Klea. Not being clever in any sense, he was relieved of temptation to that “smartness” which from the time of

<sup>1</sup> “Rights and Wrongs of the Transvaal War,” p. 173.

Archibald Forbes had become the traditional vice of war correspondents. He was a man of such unquestioned integrity that during the long campaign disputes among ourselves were referred to his judgment with the assurance of an honourable decision. Dominating him and the rest of the ship with his strident voice and a boisterous manner of apparent bonhomie was Bennet Burleigh, war correspondent to the "Daily Telegraph," a man of unusual physical strength and power of endurance, but otherwise bearing no resemblance to Pearse. He was then at the height of his reputation, but he lost some of it during this war, partly from his insistence upon giving good advice to Generals; and in spite of the unpopularity that his "smartness" toward other correspondents brought upon him, he became in later campaigns rather an object of pity as he sat isolated, shunned, or forgotten, while he displayed more imagination than accuracy in his descriptions of Homeric battles between Turks and Bulgars.

Among the other passengers were three very notable men. First came Colonel Frank Rhodes (usually known as "Franky"), brother to Cecil, whom he regarded as a divine oracle of wisdom, always clinching an argument with a quotation beginning, "Cecil says." He had been Colonel of a cavalry regiment, I think the 4th Dragoon Guards, and while he was in Johannesburg at the time of the Raid, Jameson had mistakenly looked to him to muster the Uitlanders in the city and assist the rebellion from the inside. Mistakenly, because "Franky" was not the man to lead a forlorn hope. Perhaps he was wanting in rapid decision, perhaps he recognised the absurdity of the venture; certainly he was too much of "the gentleman" for any treacherous and underhand manoeuvre. Perhaps also the "Helots" upon whom he and Jameson depended for action were not anxious to risk both their money and their lives. "There were girls in the gold-reef city!" shrieked the Poet Laureate of those days, in a poem extolling the Raid, and probably there were. But those who knew Johannesburg—

how they laughed ! Condemned to death by the Transvaal Government, " Franky " Rhodes escaped ultimately with a fine of £20,000 and a pledge never to bear arms against that State ; which pledge he religiously kept, always wearing mufti during the campaign, and devoting his attention mainly to the offices of friendship, and to visiting the hospitals ; for his nature was composed of a defensive cynicism and a genuine kindliness of heart. I have never met a man so universally beloved by men and women alike, not for great qualities but for " charm."

With us also was Major Panzera, a gunner, who had been stationed at Mafeking, and was hurriedly returning to his post, where he commanded the guns during that prolonged siege. In spite of his foreign name, he was as typical an English officer as could be found ; rather silent, contemptuous of all knowledge outside sport and war, and exactly what is meant by " fit." He boasted that he had never been sick or sorry in his life, and every day he walked so many dozen times all round the deck, carefully counting each round. At first he used to invite me to walk with him because I could keep the pace without trotting, but one day, unhappily, I referred in conversation to some well-known book (it was Carlyle's " French Revolution "), whereupon he snorted violently, halted, broke off his walk for the first time on record, and never invited me again. No amount of foreign names could have made him other than English. But the third notable figure must, I suppose, be called Irish. He was young Lord Ava, eldest son of Lord Dufferin, the distinguished Diplomatist and Ambassador, who afterwards fell on evil days through association with men too clever for him on lines not his own. I gathered that Ava had somehow lost his father's favour, had led an adventurous life upon ranches in California, and had then attached himself to Frank Rhodes for further adventure. He was a superb type of mankind, with brilliant, smiling eyes, courteous manners, a body beautifully made, measuring I don't know what round the calf and forearm, but lithe and agile at all

sports. He looked and was the very emblem of radiant vitality, and he still had nearly four months to live. Almost his equal in vitality and sports was young Hanna, whose head was cut off by a shell a month later in the early engagement at Dundee.

Of the women on board I remember only two who added anything to the amenity or hostility of the men: one a pale-faced South African girl, as devoid of guile as of mind; the other, one of those carefully negligent women to be met on most voyages—the women who industriously leave handkerchiefs and scent-bottles and wraps about, confident that they will be chivalrously restored; and who may be found after dinner in twilight corners of the ship, not unaccompanied but ominously silent. Dear old Pearse, her most devoted and far most honourable slave, innocently believed her to be interested in his accounts of Egyptian conflicts, but the sailors after passing her would shrug their shoulders and whisper, “Say, mates! See them eyes?”

So we journeyed south, past Madeira (where, as usual, everyone landed for a few hours, the “Helots” returning on board excited over curious amenities experienced in a house kept by a woman with the unsuitable name of Madame Jesus), past Teneriffe and Cape Verde, till the North Star disappeared and the lantern at the masthead swung across the unfamiliar and uninteresting constellations of the Southern Hemisphere, while in our wake flew large unknown birds, which I took to be albatrosses, though I was mistaken. At last, when we were still about four days off the Cape, we saw far off the homeward-bound mail approaching. In those days, before “wireless,” all depended on her news, and gentlemanly Pearse went round urging us not to cheer if war had been declared, because the cheering would hurt the feelings of the Boers on board. Up she came through a drift of wind and rain, and as she passed us she ran up flags signifying, “War thought certain.” So the signal also stood as we steamed into port beneath the shadow of the Table Mountain, and entered the dusty, scrubby streets of a town



redeemed from the common Colonial hideousness only by the Mountain and the relics of early Dutch settlement.

I went at once to call upon William Schreiner, brother to the author of the "South African Farm," and at that time still Premier of the Cape, and I found him sad, silent, terribly divided in mind. I dined with Cartwright, a journalist who had won the high meed of unpopularity among the "Helot" party, and who invited to meet me Sauer (one of the most honest men in the country, and the truest friend of the natives) and Hofmeyer, old and slow, but still the recognised leader of the Dutch in the Colony. Their chief outspoken complaint was against Milner's superior and seclusive ways, refusing intercourse or advice from experienced men who knew both sides in the country, and lashing the Boers to puzzled rage by his donnish satire and irony. Having resolved to reach Bloemfontein and Pretoria, if possible, before the actual fighting began, I stole away from the ship early next morning, and travelled for the first time over the Karroo, and across the Orange River, seeing many strange growths, birds, and wild animals on the road, and arriving in Bloemfontein late at night the following day.

In that quiet town—a rather beautiful town as South African towns go, and at that time the capital of one among the best-governed States in the world—I had a long conference with Chief Justice De Villiers, rather a man of culture than a politician, who proudly showed me his excellent library, his garden, and his Greek coins; with Fischer, like De Villiers an advocate of peace; and with President Steyn, in whose character I was singularly mistaken. For I thought to myself, "Here is another of those middle-aged gentlemen who, willingly or unwillingly, muddle and mess their peoples into war, like Chamberlain and the rest of them; and then watch the killing and dying from a safe and comfortable distance." And yet, from the beginning to the end of the war, there was no one—not even De Wet and Botha themselves—who faced all the personal

miseries and dangers of war with more persistent gallantry than that elderly lawyer. After our conference I sent a long telegram to the "Chronicle" about the wishes and slender hopes of the Free State people, but its terms are of no importance now; and were not of much importance then, for the crisis had come too close. Going on to Pretoria that night, I met Bennet Burleigh in the train; for, having heard of my purpose from a Johannesburg friend whom, with my usual simplicity, I had trusted, he had hurriedly followed me. Reaching Pretoria the next afternoon (September 30th) I found the capital in a state of natural excitement. Train after train was moving slowly south—stores and firewood in the front trucks, horses in the centre, men in luggage-vans behind. The trains were allotted according to Divisional districts. The Burghers rode up to the station dressed in their ordinary clothes, with Mauser rifle slung over their backs, and full cartridge-belts fastened round their shoulders or waists. Only a few gunners had uniform, but all wore the broad-brimmed soft hat of the veldt, usually stained with sweat, and almost always surrounded with a rusty crape band. For Boers, like the English working classes, have many relations, and one of them is sure to have lately died. The cheering, the simulated joy, the bitter grief and weeping of those left behind were much the same among them as among other peoples.

I called upon Kruger in his little house, guarded by two marble lions—the gift of Cecil Rhodes—but was told he was engaged in prayer. My visits to State-Secretary Reitz and Attorney-General Smuts in their pleasant villas out at Sunnyside were more opportune. Reitz, though anxious to help me personally, was nervous, excitable, and deeply perturbed. Jan Christian Smuts, then fresh from triumphant Law examinations in Cambridge, and in later years to become the admired idol of the British public, was sorrowful but calm. Both came to breakfast with me in the hotel next morning, but, to their disgust, Bennet Burleigh insisted upon forcing himself upon our table, and I was too stupidly polite

to drive him away. I sent a long telegram upon their opinions and the general situation, but he was able to send another, and that taught me the inner meaning of the song, "Never introduce your Donah to your pal!" I also called on Conyngham Greene, brother of the famous singer, Plunket Greene, and for the last three years British Agent in Pretoria; him I found politely silent, as he was bound to be, but evidently convinced of what was coming. I also for the first time met Leopold Amery, then correspondent for the "Times," now (1923) First Lord of the Admiralty, an elevation which neither of us could then have foretold.

All but military trains had ceased running, but Reitz generously allowed me to go towards the Natal frontier in one of the four trains that were taking down the 800 Middleburg farmers with their horses, and Burleigh, of course, was not to be left behind. In the van were a score of Boers, who lay on the floor or sat with legs dangling out of the open doors, smoking enormous pipes and talking gravely over the disaster of the war and their fears for wives and children left on the farms at the mercy of Kaffirs. About midnight, at Elandsfontein, a violent collision flung us all on top of each other, and shook the rifles and cartridge-belts down upon our heads. Burleigh was much alarmed by a cut on his face, and while I was mopping up his blood by the light of a match, I could hear Kaffirs chattering in their mud huts close by, while in the distance a cornet played "Home, sweet Home," with variations.

We crawled on through night and day until we came to a full halt at Standerton, where I requested to see the General, and was ushered into the presence of Joubert—"slim Piet," as his friends and enemies called him—the hero of the Boer victory at Majuba, and now in command of the Boer Army. He was surrounded by young men and boys in ordinary dress, forming his Staff. He himself wore the usual brown slouch hat with a crape band, and a blue frock coat, not luxuriously new. His beard was white, but his long straight hair rather black than grey. His brown or sallow face was

deeply scored and wrinkled, but the dark brown eyes still bright, looking out on the world with a simplicity mingled with shrewdness, or some subtler quality. Speaking English with a piquant lack of grammar and misuse of words, he kindly told me that if I would stop there for the night, he would take me up to the frontier with him next morning. This happened, though I nearly lost the chance by having to drag Burleigh after me. Seeing the train moving out of the station as we approached, I spurred up to the engine and ordered the driver to stop, which, to my astonishment and his own, he did. Then, while I was hurrying our baggage in at the rear, Burleigh ordered the Kaffir who was carrying the case containing all my saddlery and camp equipment to throw it away, and I did not discover the loss till the train had moved out. I never understood exactly why Burleigh gave that order. On the whole, I think it was in panic rather than in malign devotion to his paper's interests ; but throughout the campaign I never recovered from the inconvenience of the loss. For the moment I had to content myself with his congratulations on my promptitude, and his promise to repay. But it is all long ago, and time obliterates debt.

After a while, Joubert sent to invite me into his carriage, and there discoursed fully upon the situation. As I knew, he had done his utmost for peace, leading the moderate party in opposition to the Kruger Government. "The heart of my soul," he kept repeating, "is bloody with sorrow." But none the less he described how bit by bit England had pushed the Boers backward and backward out of their inheritance, taking advantage of them in every conference and native war. He appeared particularly hurt that Queen Victoria had taken no notice of a long letter or pamphlet he had personally written to her upon the crisis. Probably the old Queen had never received the letter, and it may still be lying about somewhere in the Foreign or Colonial Office. But the neglect to answer it was a mistake. Joubert told me he had hoped to build up a South African Confederacy of the



four main States, with equal rights and local self-government under British protection—much the sort of thing that Campbell-Bannerman succeeded in creating afterwards. “But now,” he said, as he sorrowfully parted from me at Zandspruit, “now we can only leave it to God. If it is His will that the Transvaal perish, we can only do our best.” It was often said afterwards that Joubert refused to push the British to extremities at the beginning of the war, and in fact so long as he lived. The charge was probably untrue, but his heart was not in the work of defeating us, and if De Wet or even Botha had then been in command, I cannot doubt that our struggle, hard as it was, would have been immeasurably more difficult; for we should have been driven right down to the coast and have had to reconquer South Africa from the sea.

At Zandspruit the Boers had mustered something under 10,000 men in a fairly organized camp, and the men rushed up to greet their Commander-in-Chief, shaking him by the hand and patting him affectionately on the back. For the Boer Army was, I suppose, the most democratic that ever existed, the Greek being almost servile in comparison. I went over the camp, and compared it in my mind with the sort of thing the Cimbri and Teutons used as moving base when they attacked the Roman Province, although at that time the Boers had but few women with them. The kitchens were poor, bread taking three days to make, and many of the detachments eating their meat raw—really raw, not sun-dried as biltong. But the sights that attracted me most, though I only glanced sideways, were two great guns laid on their trucks upon the rails and swaddled up in sacking. They were two of those Creusot 6-in. guns which came to be so familiar to us as “Long Toms,” throwing 96-lb. shell—nothing very tremendous, the veterans of the Great War may think, but sufficient in effect if they collided with house or man or horse. By Joubert’s courtesy I secured a coal truck, and partly pushing it, partly helped on the ascent by a little engine, we made our way past Volksrust, having

fatal Majuba Hill on our right, over the frontier to Charles-town, the first British village of Natal. Through the station-master there we both sent long telegrams, and agreed to use Press rate (two shillings a word), Burleigh observing that full rates (double) would ruin any paper. In his zeal, however, he risked more than his paper's ruin, for he asserted, on the strength of a rumour, that the Boers crossed our frontier every night ; which assertion helped to determine war, if any hope of peace then remained.

In a train waiting for unhappy refugees, who kept pouring in from the Transvaal on foot or on any wheel that would move, we proceeded by night under Laing's Nek tunnel (which our Government ought to have blown up directly after the refugees had passed), and so, with three or four dead children and a baby born in the carriage, we arrived at Newcastle, where I spent two days buying the necessary horses and a cart. In which purchases I discovered the highly specialised meaning attached to "loyalty" under these conditions. For when a Colonial in Natal said he was "loyal to the core," it meant he had succeeded in swindling some Englishman or Army Department to his satisfaction ; but when he wailed that "loyalty didn't pay," it meant that he had failed to swindle some Englishman or an Army Department. Under the management of Colonel Edward Ward in Ladysmith, the wail frequently arose, but in dealings with me over horses and carts, loyalty invariably predominated.

So, on October 5th, at last I came to Ladysmith, then as unknown to history as to me, and there I was doomed to remain, with brief intervals, till May 6th, in which time I came to know almost every stock and stone of the little place, and history came to know something too. For myself, there was a good deal of variety (unpleasant variety), especially at first, in finding stabling and "forage" for my three horses, and food and shelter for my elderly Cape boy and a young Zulu, to say nothing of myself. In those days, though a Censorship was just established, a correspondent with the

British Army had to look after his own supplies and transport, and the task as a rule occupied about half his working time. How different was my condition in the châteaux or hotels of the authorised correspondents during the latter part of the Great War in France, Belgium, and Germany ! Then the Staff motor appeared at the door exactly at the appointed time ; a friendly Staff officer accompanied me to whatever part of the line or advance I wished to visit, and afterwards acted as one of the Censors, always on the spot ; food appeared, falling like manna from heaven without my stir ; servants appeared when required, like slaves in the "Arabian Nights." All my time could be given to seeing, hearing, and then writing the daily telegram, which was certain to be despatched. Reverse each one of those advantages so as to create the greatest possible disadvantage, and you may imagine the condition of a war correspondent in the old days.

It is a queer thing : There is nothing a soldier—I suppose even a General—enjoys more than reading a good account of any campaigning and fighting in which he has shared ; yet, until about the middle of the Great War, every possible obstacle was invariably put in the war correspondent's way, though he was the man whose duty it was to write the account that might give so much pleasure. Until he became personally familiar with the General and Staff, he was despised and insulted ; information was rudely refused, and he had to dig it out or conjecture what was likely to happen, or what had already happened ; he had to scrape together his servants, transport, and food as best he could, and write his telegram at any odd time. All this I endured and surmounted as part of the game, but the most distracting trouble was the search for the Censor. Two kinds of officer were selected as Censors in that campaign : one the man who was no good for anything on earth, and was never to be found in any tent or office labelled as his ; the other some Intelligence officer of exceptional ability, whose ordinary work was vital to the Staff, and who, naturally, regarded a

correspondent's telegram as a tiresome interruption. Of the latter kind were the two Intelligence officers who ultimately became fixed as the Censors in the Ladysmith siege—Major Altham (now the distinguished General, with whom I became acquainted once more in the Dardanelles), and Major David Henderson (afterwards also a General, distinguished in command of the Flying Corps during part of the Great War, and after the so-called Peace as Head of the Red Cross in Geneva, where that fine personality and singularly attractive man died in 1922, to the grief of myself and all who knew him).

In the midst of these tribulations and the general chaos of a base into which regiments from India and detachments of Colonial troops were pouring apparently at random, I rushed up to Harrismith over Van Reenen's Pass, in hope of seeing what the Free State was doing. And I found the Free State dragging guns along with ox waggons, while the Scots, who had dominated that little, bare, but sunny town on the Plaatberg, were stealing away across the Natal frontier, usually hidden among sacks and other baggage, which the railway officials carefully avoided investigating ; for were they not Scots themselves ? I, too, contrived to get down in similar fashion, though without claim to Scottish support. And it was fortunate that I did. For that was on October 8th, and the war openly began on the 11th. On the 13th Sir George White arrived to take command. On the 14th I made another rush—up to Dundee, where Penn-Symons held a brigade thrown forward in a helpless position. While he was talking to me in his tent (I had been introduced by young Hanna of the Leicesters, with whom I was putting up, as he had put up in my room in Ladysmith) a shell plumped close by us, and Penn-Symons rushed out crying, " Damned impudence, they're shelling us ! " Yes, from a hill commanding his whole camp, the impudent Boers were shelling his little force. Within a few days they were to kill Penn-Symons himself as he galloped about the plain with an



orderly carrying a red pennon in front of him ; and they were to kill Colonel Gunning, who seemed to me the model of a soldier ; and they were to kill young Hanna too, and to drive that gallant brigade of 18th Hussars, Leicesters, Dublins, K.R.R., and Royal Irish Fusiliers back upon Ladysmith by unknown mountain ways—unknown except to one gallant old Englishman, Colonel Dartnell, long used to the country. He brought them safely down to the Sunday River, where on October 25th George Steevens and I rode out to meet them, only twenty-five miles from safety at Ladysmith.

Sir George White had done his utmost to keep that line of retreat open for them. He had secured the bloody little victory of Elandslaagte (October 21st), where Sir John French commanded the cavalry and Colonel Ian Hamilton the foot (and where as I climbed in the dark about the kopjes among the dead and wounded, I nearly trod on the upturned face of an old white-bearded man, who turned out to be Kock, father of the Judge Kock, commandant of the Boer force. The old fellow had not been fighting, but had prayed and read the Bible during the battle until overcome by the wounds of which he afterwards died in our hospital). Again, on the 24th, White succeeded in protecting the retreat by the long, indecisive engagement sometimes known as Rietfontein, sometimes as Tinta Inyoni, on the way to the Modder Spruit beyond Pepworth Hill, soon to be familiar. The greater part of the brigade was saved, but at a cost which might have been spared but for our habitual contempt of the enemy, or for those political reasons that are the curse of strategists.

It was mainly political reasons also that kept our larger force in Ladysmith itself—political reasons and the objections to sacrificing the £2,000,000's worth of military stores collected there ; for in those days £2,000,000 seemed a large sum. But for political reasons Sir George White would never have remained in so indefensible a position.

The politicians feared the effect of a general retreat upon the dubious populations of Natal and the Cape, but it was soon evident that our position gave the Boers the initiative in strategy. Three or four times we defeated them in small engagements, as at Elandslaagte, but the defeats made no difference to the slow but hardly interrupted movements by which we could feel them gradually hemming us in. From the small hills close around Ladysmith we could watch them on all sides calmly trekking along with their ox-waggons and commandos of mounted men, and day by day the radius of my rides outside the town became shorter. Then came the appalling event of "Black Monday" (October 30th). Some four miles away to the north of the town, in difficult country called Nicholson's Nek, well known to me because I had ridden out there with Major Altham, the Gloucesters, just arrived from India, and the Royal Irish Fusiliers, attempting a surprise themselves, were surprised in the darkness by a large Boer force under De Wet. Stampeded mules carried havoc and lost the mountain guns. The enemy, hidden among rocks, poured a terrible fire upon our men, who were as usual only too visible. Many were killed, many wounded, 1,100 were taken as prisoners to Pretoria.

It was the first British defeat, but a few hours later I was to witness the second. For the battle extended in an arc of about fifteen miles from Nicholson's Nek in the north round to Lombard's Kop, and for many hours before dawn, all through the morning till late afternoon, I was out among the kopjes at the centre of the arc, near "Limit Hill" on the right of the Newcastle road, where the Gordons lay in support of the Leicesters and the K.R.R. These were trying to advance across a bit of open ground close in front, but were repeatedly driven back by heavy rifle fire from rocky kopjes beyond. At last they seemed to become confused, and began wandering to and fro like ants. Little by little they came back, calmly, and turning to fire as they came. But they came back, and little by little the Boer fire came

on. At the same time a "Long Tom" began flinging his huge shells over our heads into the town from Pepworth Hill, which commands all that region from the left of the Newcastle road, and our little field batteries were powerless, not only against him but against other Boer guns.

The retreat became general and not always calm. I think nothing could have saved the town from capture and the force from destruction had not a train arrived early in the morning almost on the field itself, bringing in it the 2nd Battalion of the Rifle Brigade and Captain Lambton with naval guns, sent up from the Cape by Sir Percy Scott. There were two 4.7's and four 12-pounders. Captain Lambton got the 12-pounders into action at once just above the Newcastle road, and they were able to reach the Long Tom emplacement. For the moment the situation was saved. Sir George White ordered a concentration upon all points of defence close around the town, and those chosen points were never afterwards surrendered. But that afternoon was a time of great exhaustion for all, and grave apprehension for those in command. I wrote an account of what I had seen, and searched wearily through all parts and quarters for a Censor, of course, in vain; and I did not get in touch with the telegraph till past midnight. This was the more disappointing because I had that morning received a telegram from Massingham, saying "Greatly pleased," which is the only reward a war correspondent cares for.

Three days later (November 2nd) the regular siege began, the railway and telegraph wires being cut, and the town exposed to guns from all four points of the compass. Happily, Sir John French had slipped out under heavy rifle fire by the last train, to conduct his remarkable campaign of bluff upon the Colesberg lines in the north of Cape Colony, and further to win renown in the relief of Kimberley and the defeat of Cronje at Paardeberg. Happily, also, Bennet Burleigh contrived to slip away with his coach-and-four. He had gone round asking everyone whether he should go. Frank Rhodes compared him to the man who asks you

whether he should marry a certain girl, and if you say "No ! you don't think much of her," all the time you are sure he will, and he does. So Burleigh slipped off, and probably, from his paper's point of view, he was right in going. He had the free run of the telegraph in the Natal headquarters, while we, who were shut up inside Ladysmith, got few messages out. Kaffirs could sometimes be induced to attempt walking through with them for anything from £10 to £50 down (I believe Steevens paid £100), but such Kaffirs were scarce and uncertain. The Kaffir carrying my most important message (an account of the fighting on January 6th) was shot dead, and my message was kindly given to me months afterwards in Pretoria by the Boer who shot him. Even when a heliograph was arranged between White and Buller, we were allowed to send only thirty words each, and one cannot get much "atmosphere" into thirty words. So that I suppose we ought to have gone, and for about an hour I did debate the point with myself, though, like Burleigh, with mind already made up. It seemed to me impossible to leave the position. To stay was not a case of courage, but simply of common behaviour. We could not tell how long the siege might last, but there we were in the very front line, and for a war correspondent that is the choice of all positions in the world. How could we abandon it ? Or how could we even think of quitting those famous British and Irish regiments gathered there at the centre of peril ? It appeared to me unimaginable, and evidently others of my colleagues thought so too, for not one of them attempted to go.

And those others were very remarkable men. Of Harry Pearse I have spoken, but there was Jack Stuart, of the "Morning Post"—impulsive, dare-devil, inured to South African ways in Johannesburg, and rather inclined to play the rough and dissolute adventurer ; in reality an artist in temperament, a connoisseur in literature, and himself an admirable writer, as was proved by his having been on the Staff of Henley's "Scottish Observer" and "National



Observer." He was of friendly and helpful nature, though while taking down to Durban my account of the final relief (I being too ill to move) he did manage to have his saddle containing it stolen on the way, and, with his experience of Colonial habits, he should have been more on his guard. Then there was Hutton, of "Reuter's," who also had lived in Johannesburg, and was not a journalist by profession, but an excellent correspondent, and a close comrade of mine throughout the siege. There were Lionel James, of the "Times," and William Maxwell, of the "Standard," who lived together in a house of their own, and were happily intimate with the Naval officers; capable and experienced correspondents both, lately from Egypt, and since well-known to the world.<sup>1</sup> There was Melton Prior, of the "Illustrated London News," a veteran campaigner, a Rabelaisian humorist, and generous by nature. And there were Robert MacHugh, of the "Daily Telegraph," and Ernest Smith of the "Daily News," both to become distinguished correspondents in after years. There were besides one or two local men whose names I have forgotten, though one of them died, poor fellow! during the siege.

But ranking high above all, in my esteem, were my two friends, George Steevens and Willie Maud. Maud I had met in Greece, as I have said, and wherever one met him, he was always the same true-hearted, sunny-tempered, absolutely honourable man. He was for the "Graphic," and was by far the best artist correspondent I have known, as well as being a good writer, and entirely fearless, as his clear, china-blue eyes seemed to show. He, too, had been lately in Egypt, and had there married a French girl of singular beauty and charm, whose miniature he always carried round his neck, and was fond of showing me. With him came George Steevens, famous already as war correspondent to the "Daily Mail." He had published a collection of "Mono-

<sup>1</sup> Amusing to reflect that Maxwell actually became my Censor at the Dardanelles! And a very good Censor too, knowing a correspondent's feelings and tribulations, though unfriendly tongues might call him a thief set to catch a thief!

logues of the Dead," in the manner of Lucian, and had written some remarkable letters from India. But his great success had been his account of the Egyptian campaign, "With Kitchener to Khartoum," a book of enormous sale. In appearance he was rather small, brown-eyed, white-faced, not very noticeable at first sight. Maud said he had a look of Keats; I did not recognise that, but he looked what he was—a refined and thoughtful scholar; yet very active and quite confident of himself. Reserved and generally silent except for an occasional telling or biting remark; none the less, to please people, he would actually sing in public—the "Lincolnshire Poacher" being his favourite—and it was characteristic that, though I had not met him before, since he was with the Turks in the Greek War, he became very friendly with me when I happened to win the rifle-shooting match among the correspondents, and afterwards contributed various sketches and parodies to the "Ladysmith Lyre," which he edited, as by nature chosen for the task. He was only thirty, but everyone recognised in him a touch of the inexplicable quality called genius. With him, as with Maud, who was devoted to him, I soon became intimate, and one night we took a kind of vow, we three, always, whatever happened, to go out campaigning together in future wars. He was to see no other campaign. Maud was to die in the next from the effects of this. And I, who was older than either, was to go out to succeeding wars alone.

I need not give a detailed account of the prolonged siege, which lasted from November 2nd to February 28th. I published a fairly complete diary of it, containing maps and full statistics of numbers, deaths in various forms, food and prices.<sup>1</sup> Besides, a siege is likely to be rather monotonous even to the besieged, though, in this case, we were exposed to many varieties of danger and suffering from shells, rifle-fire, overwhelming dust storms, torrential rains, enteric, dysentery, thirst, and the extremes of hunger. We corre-

<sup>1</sup> "Ladysmith: The Diary of a Siege" (Methuen, 1900).

spondents did our best to increase the variety by issuing the "Ladysmith Lyre," edited, as I said, by George Steevens, and illustrated by Willie Maud. Some regiments also held concerts at night in concealed positions, and there were one or two race meetings and athletic sports. But as week followed week of hope deferred, while sickness and death steadily increased, our spirits, though not our resolution, rather flagged, and during the last two months of the siege no amusements were attempted, for we were all gradually becoming too weak to sing, almost too weak to walk, and too thin to ride.

By an arrangement with Joubert, a neutral camp, called Intombi, was organised on the open plain further down the Klipp River, about three miles from the town, and there most of the sick and wounded were sent, together with a good many of the townspeople, all of whom the army had to ration daily. But what with various forms of swindle and the degeneracy natural among a random gathering of men and women unemployed and free from danger, the place became something of a scandal. The best of the civilians stayed in the town, retiring in the day-time into large burrows, which they dug out of the sandy cliffs along the river bank, but usually emerging at night. I think the finest of these dug-outs was an ecclesiastical burrow constructed for the Archdeacon of the town, though many were convenient for their peculiar purpose. But it was strange how rapidly human nature degenerated underground, and after trying a burrow for nearly the whole of one morning I resolved never to leave the surface again. So I found shelter from sun and rain, though not from shells, in the corrugated iron cottage of a fine old townsman called Cairns, a builder and a humorist, though a Scot; and with two of his friends from Durban we made a pleasant circle. I chose the house because it was under the battery which Captain Lambton had built for the 4·7 that he called "The Lady Anne," in compliment to his sister. (His other 4·7, stationed close by, was properly called "Princess Victoria,"

in compliment to someone else, but was invariably known as "Bloody Mary," which was a compliment to no one.) The battery was exactly opposite the "Long Tom" (or "Puffing Billy") on the summit of Bulwana Hill. The moment "Long Tom" flashed at dawn, or at any time throughout the day, the "Lady Anne" answered, though her shells sometimes fell short, sometimes went over, and sometimes hit only the embrasure, which was 36 feet thick. I counted that the "Tom" 6-in. shell took 22 seconds to reach our battery, and as "Lady Anne's" shell, being of higher velocity, though less in size, took rather shorter time to cover the distance, the Boer gunners had to be quick in sinking the gun down below his parapet, which they always did. As the Boers were very good shots, their shells shrieked over my humble roof, and plunged into the kopje on which the "Lady Anne" stood above me. I had calculated upon that advantage, but about half a dozen times the big shells fell short, and then our little bit of field at the back was devastated, and the cottage, stable, and my Kaffirs' hut stood in peril. However, it was well worth the risk to hear old Cairns laugh at what he always called the humming-birds.

Nearly every day I rode round half the horseshoe of defences that extended for about fifteen miles along the various hills close about the town. I had then acquired a horse of remarkable good sense and intelligence, whom during the length of the siege I induced to talk quite as rationally as most human beings. Round we went from post to post, visiting the 1st King's (Liverpools), the 1st Devons, the relics of the 1st Gloucesters, the 2nd Leicesters, the 1st and 2nd K.R.R.s, the 2nd Rifle Brigade, the 1st Manchesters, the 2nd Gordons, and the relics of the Royal Irish Fusiliers, who held an important link position at "Range Post" under the command of Major Churcher, an excellent officer, and the finest banjo-player and singer to his instrument ever known.

The regiments were brigaded pretty much in that order,



and besides there was the Cavalry Brigade, under Major-General Brocklehurst (5th Dragoon Guards, 5th Lancers, 18th and 19th Hussars, and Imperial Light Horse, chiefly volunteers from Johannesburg); three regiments of local mounted volunteers (under Colonel Royston), and the gunners (six batteries, under Colonel Downing, of which I became most intimate with the 69th, commanded by Major Wing, a man of singular charm and intellect, killed by a shell long afterwards as a General in France). And then, of course, there was the Naval Brigade with the "Powerful's" guns, under command of Captain Sir Hedworth Lambton (afterwards Meux), a very extraordinary type of man, as the House of Commons and all the world came to know some years later. Like most human beings, he was full of contrary qualities, only the contradictions were more violently emphasised in him than in most of us. For instance, on the first occasion when he took me up to his "Lady Anne" battery, we found two townsmen nosing around just outside it. He rushed upon them as though to strike them dead. Then, smiling politely, he observed: "No doubt you're all right. I am sure you're all right." (Then with rising passion) "God damn you, you blasted curs, don't answer me!" (Smiling again with increased politeness) "I'm sure you mean no harm. I don't want to find fault with you. But" (with terrific fury) "God damn your souls and bodies! If ever I find you here again I'll have you hanged or fired from the gun!"

He was like that. Almost at the same moment he would be buoyant and sunk in gloom, encouraging and overwhelmed in forebodings; full of laughter, and bitter as wormwood. I think he alone realised that the siege would be long. On the first day he said, "We are shut up till Christmas!" and everyone jeered at him. Later on he said to me, "This is all very well if we are holding up a Boer army. But what if we are being held up by a man and a boy?" There was something that people call "dæmonic" or incalculable about him: something different from the





military officer's mind. And so he was immensely popular, not only because he had saved the garrison from frightful slaughter or the "bird-cage" in Pretoria. At his side stood a young Naval officer, Lionel Halsey, also destined to win fame.

But what a remarkable set of officers, naval and military alike, was gathered in that little town with its little garrison! Sir George White himself—we used to call him "Georgina," chiefly, I suppose, because of his refined appearance and a manner so different from another General's, who could not speak without cursing you or himself with complicated oaths. Some blamed Sir George for not attempting to fight his way out and join Buller below the Tugela. I suppose he might have done that with the loss of about half his force, though he might just as likely have lost the whole force and all his guns.<sup>1</sup> But, as so often happens when we outsiders criticise Generals in command, we had no notion what his real difficulties were, nor even what were his orders. For instance, not one of us heard of that order "spatchcocked" by Buller into his message after the defeat at Colenso—the order to burn his stores and surrender on the best terms he could get. Not one of us knew that White signalled in reply that he did not understand the message, and when it was repeated, simply refused to obey. Such a refusal, in those dark days, reveals a strength of resolution, not, certainly above some women's, but above the nickname of "Georgina." Not one of us, outside his most intimate Staff, knew a syllable of those interchanged signals till Buller himself incautiously revealed the truth in an after-luncheon speech (October 10, 1901). Few of us, of course, heard the interpretation of any signals. But I was fortunate enough to hear one at all events. It was on February 2nd,

<sup>1</sup> White's force at the beginning of the siege numbered 572 officers, 12,924 men, 5309 horses, 4,539 mules, 1701 oxen, 2412 attendants, 55 guns, and 18 machine guns. At the end of the siege it numbered, 403 officers, 9761 men (besides 154 officers and 2624 men sick and wounded), 2907 horses, 3713 mules, 252 oxen, 2302 attendants, and the same number of guns as at the beginning.



when food was running terribly short, no matter how many horses we killed and ate each day, and when sickness was terrible too. A messenger came hurrying down from Observation Hill. In eager expectation the code words were spelt out, I think by Beauchamp Duff, afterwards Commander-in-Chief in India (alas for him !), and the interpretation ran : " Sir Stafford Northcote, Governor of Bombay, has been made a Peer." " There's richness ! " as Squeers said of the skimmed milk for the hungry boys. Think of it ! A new Peer ! What tidings of great joy for a sick and starving garrison !

As Chief of Staff, close at Sir George's side, stood Archibald Hunter, famous for Egyptian service. It was he who commanded the most brilliant exploit of the siege—the destruction of a new " Long Tom " and a howitzer known as " Silent Susan " on Little Bulwan or Gun Hill (night of December 7th and 8th). He selected bodies of the Imperial Light Horse, Natal Carbineers, and Border Mounted Rifles, and under guidance of David Henderson (wounded) they climbed the face of the hill, lighted by an obscured moon, and rushed the position. Karri Davies of the Light Horse, by an inspiration of genius, kept shouting, " Fix bayonets ! Give 'em the cold steel ! " though only four bayonets were present, since the Colonial troops, like the Boers, never carried them. Captain Fowke of the Sappers blew up the big gun and the howitzer. The Light Horse brought back the breech-block in triumph, and now that " Tom " had gone aloft with " Susan," we enjoyed an interval of calm, so that I was able to do some washing, hanging my clothes upon the line of fire to dry.

The only similar exploit was accomplished three nights later (December 10th–11th) by four companies of the 2nd Rifle Brigade, under command of their own Colonel Metcalfe, and accompanied by a few gunners under Major Wing of the 69th Battery, and a few sappers under a very gallant young officer, Digby-Jones (killed after extraordinary

bravery during the great attack of January 6th). In the darkness they climbed up a steep and difficult kopje called Surprise Hill, situated close in front of Nicholson's Nek, and captured a very troublesome 4·7 howitzer on the summit. Unhappily there was some delay in exploding it, and the Boers gathered round the base of the hill, and confused the men by shouting "2nd R.B.!" "2nd R.B.!" in English. So that the Brigade had eleven killed and a lot of wounded, among whom was Captain Paley, whom I had known in Crete as Governor of a district. He was shot through the chest and had his hip-bone broken, but as I helped to carry him in, he said only, "But we got the gun!"

To return to Sir George White's Staff and other officers, consider what an extraordinary set they were, and to what distinction many of them have since risen: Henry Rawlinson, the eager, rather rash and headstrong soldier, as we thought him, so famous later for his command of the Fourth Army in the Great War, and now (1923) as Commander-in-Chief in India; Cecil Nevil Macready, afterwards famous as Adjutant-General in France, and still later distinguished for his endeavours to secure peace (yes, peace!) as Commander-in-Chief in Ireland during a terrible time; David Henderson and Edward Altham, whom I have mentioned; Archibald Murray, at a later time Chief of Staff in France, and afterwards Commander-in-Chief on the Suez Canal and organiser of the victory that led to the conquest of the Turks in Palestine; Ian Hamilton, that gallant, chivalrous, and attractive personality, wounded in youth at Majuba Hill, commanding the 7th Brigade along Cæsar's Camp and Waggon Hill at Ladysmith, afterwards holding various Commands at home and abroad, and then Commander-in-Chief in the tragic drama of the Dardanelles; David Bruce, the famous bacteriologist, who had come out to study South African horsesickness, and held command in the Intombi Camp, about as difficult and ungrateful a position as mortal man could hold; but since then to be famous throughout the world for his scientific work upon germ diseases; and

Edward Ward, immortalised by Sir George's epigram as "The best commissariat officer since Moses," and well deserving the praise; for indeed our preservation from death by hunger was due to him, backed up by Colonel Stoneman, his second in command, and a true friend of mine during and after the siege till he died of enteric at Maritzburg—a death against which he took precautions, perhaps too industriously.

Edward Ward was, and remains, one of the most admirable characters I have known. In the midst of disasters and extreme perplexity, whether at Ladysmith or afterwards in Pretoria, I have never seen him for a moment perturbed, "rattled," or even sharp-tempered. He always took whatever happened (and it was seldom anything good that happened) with an unruffled mind and a quiet smile. In a moment he appeared to know exactly the right thing to do, as by some instinctive gift, like a good sheep-dog's. I knew him angry only once. It was when (on December 20th) the Mayor and Town Councillors went on a solemn deputation petitioning him to stop the soldiers' Sunday bathing, because it shocked the feelings of the women. For a mixture of hypocrisy and heartlessness I take that deputation to be unequalled in history. The soldiers, defending that Mayor, those Councillors, and those women, were exposed all the week long to sun and cold and dirt, on rocks and hillsides where it was impossible for them even to dip their hands in water. On Sundays, because the Boers seldom fired then, they were marched down to quiet places on the river to bathe, and to any decent man or woman the sight of their pleasure should have been one of the few joys in the siege. But townspeople who thought nothing of charging their defenders sixpence for a penny bottle of soda, or two shillings for twopenn'orth of cake, trembled for the delicate feelings of their wives and daughters. Then, indeed, Edward Ward blazed with wrath. "If the women don't like seeing the men, why do they look?" he asked. Other words he added, and the foul deputation trembled and withdrew.

There would be many others to tell of, if one had infinite space : Captain Vallentin, of the Intelligence, a first rate officer, afterwards killed at Standerton ; Colonel William Knox (called " Nasty Knox " for fun, because he looked the very model of an irascible martinet), a very generous nature and master of fortification ; and Beauchamp Duff, already mentioned. There were Frank Rhodes and Lord Ava, of whom I have already spoken ; Lord Cardigan and Clive Dixon (16th Lancers, a genius at caricature). Jameson of the Raid and his associate in that ill-omened enterprise, Sir John Willoughby, were also present during the siege, but were seldom seen.

Returning to the pious Boer habit of seldom firing on Sunday, I recall a conversation I heard between two Devon men who were washing by the river. " Why don't they go on bombardin' of us to-day ? " said one. " 'Cos it's Sunday, and they're singin' 'ymns," said the other. " Well," said the first, " if they was to start bombardin' of us, there ain't only one 'ymn I'd sing, and that's ' Rock of Ages, cleft for me, Let me 'ide myself in Thee.' " One sometimes heard pleasing pieces of " gup " too ; as when a Kaffir, stealing across the lines from a Boer camp behind Pepworth Hill, reported that the Boers (who, as I noticed, had no bayonets) were being taught the bayonet exercise by a prisoner—a sergeant of the Royal Irish Fusiliers—with a rope round his neck ! Again, on November 12th, ten days after the beginning of the siege, the Boers, with the fine simplicity of philanthropists who know all men to be brothers, sent to our hospital camp for some chlorodyne, as they were suffering from dysentery like ourselves ; and we gave them chlorodyne, and a little brandy besides. Whereupon our satiric soldiers invented the report that Joubert asked for forage because his horses were hungry, and Sir George White replied : " I would gladly accede to your request, but have only enough forage myself to last three years." And, having always taken great interest in birds, I may recall another peculiarity of the siege : among the Gordons, a



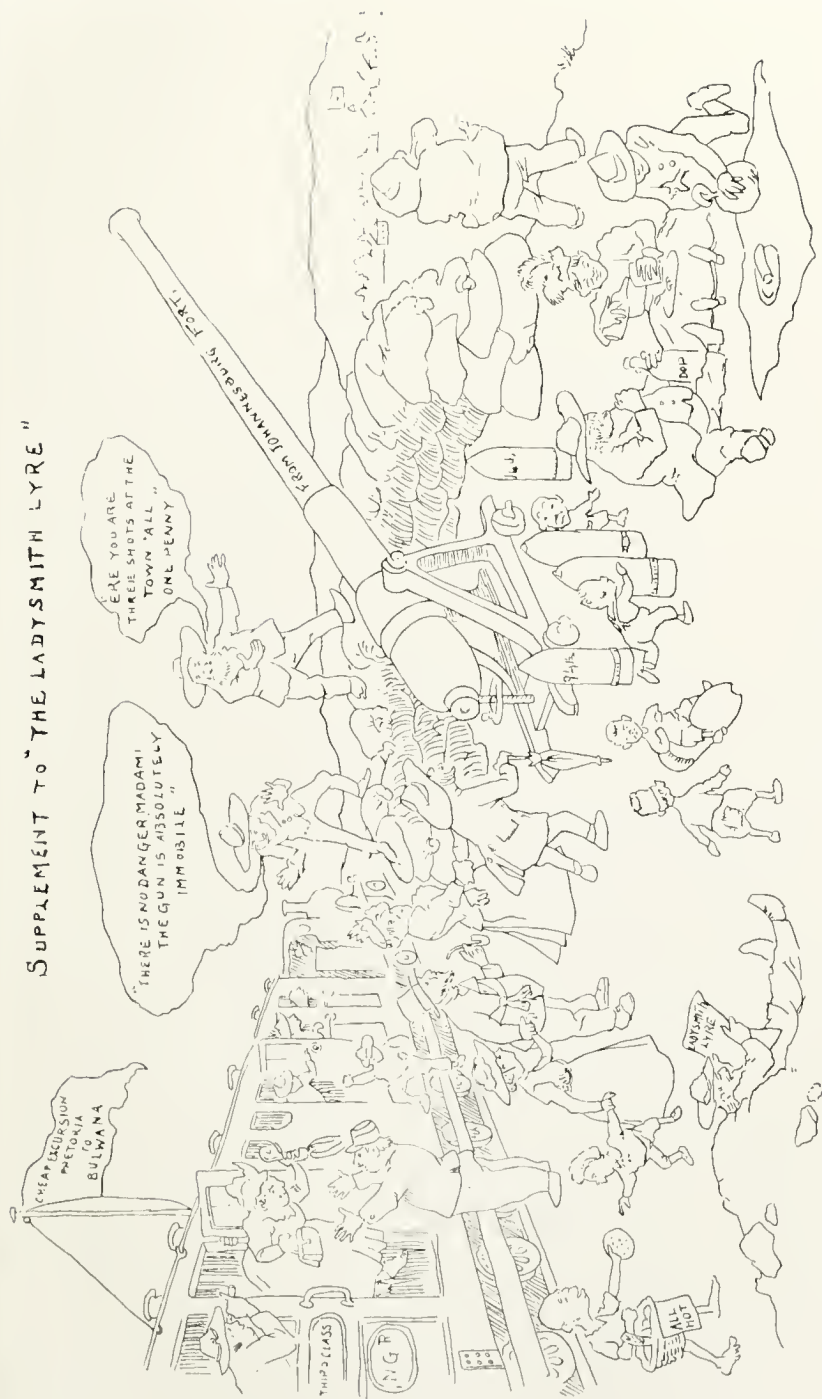
Hindoo from Benares earned Paradise and a shilling a day by sitting all day long under an umbrella upon a pile of sacks to give warning when he saw a "Long Tom" flash. But in other camps a sentry was kept posted to blow a whistle ; which was all very well until a mocking-bird caught the trick of the whistle and blew it at all times of day. What was even more confusing, he learnt to imitate the scream and buzzle of a shell, and I always hoped he would learn the explosion too. I mention this for the benefit of any future W. H. Hudson in Natal, who might otherwise be puzzled by this development of song.

George Lynch, who was a correspondent, I think for "The Echo," supplied us with additional amusement when he rode out of camp one day (December 2nd) on his charger "Kruger," captured from the Boers, and stained brown on one side with Condyl's fluid, while the other side was left dangerously white for want of painting material. In one pocket he carried a bottle of whisky as a present for Joubert, and over his head shone a white umbrella embellished with the words, "Ladysmith Lyre, Advt. Dept." He disappeared among the Boers on Bulwana, whereupon Hutton of "Reuter's" and I requested Sir George White to be allowed to go and see what became of him. But the General was properly wroth, refused us leave, and said he would have Lynch shot if he returned. As the Boers were also inclined to shoot him, he had a dubious time, but survives to this day.

We had, as I said, two or three fine concerts among the men, and on Christmas night Frank Rhodes and Karri Davies gave all the besieged children a party and Christmas tree. So that up to the New Year, 1900, I cannot say we were dull, and in those times I was justified in writing for the "Ladysmith Lyre" a parody called "Omar on the River Bank," containing the stanza :

*"A pipe of Boer tobacco 'neath the blue,  
A tin of meat, a bottle, and a few  
Choice magazines like 'Harmsworth's' or the 'Strand'—  
I sometimes think war has its blessings too."*

SUPPLEMENT TO "THE LADYSMITH LYRE"



A BOER HOLIDAY

From a Drawing by W. T. Maud in "The Ladysmith Lyre"



I quote the stanza because Pearse was fond of repeating the last line upon the most unpleasant occasions, as when a 96-lb. shell, aimed at the Royal Hotel, wrecked his little room next door and destroyed all his kit and documents ; or when a similar shell, aimed with the same intent, because the Boers knew that " Franky " Rhodes and a lot of Staff officers dined there, dashed through the hotel while we were at dinner, and unhappily cut off both the legs of Dr. Starke, a harmless gentleman who had come out to study birds and always spent all daylight on the river bank, with a kitten which he carried everywhere in a basket.

But, indeed, after the first month, the blessings of our stationary pilgrimage began to fail. By the end of November the Boers had four " Long Toms " and twenty-nine other guns " playing " on us from various quarters. They used their guns as rifles, seldom concentrating their fire, but aiming at any target they saw, even at solitary men.<sup>1</sup> But still the shells were annoying, and the sickness, which was far worse, continually increased. On December 17th we correspondents were told that Buller had suffered a serious defeat at Colenso, and the relief must be indefinitely postponed. We were instructed to keep the men and camp cheerful in consequence. It was a difficult task. George Steevens had just been caught by enteric, and Maud and I were much engaged in looking after him. There were already more than 1000 sick in Intombi Camp. All of us were being strictly rationed by Colonel Ward, and outside rations, the prices were mounting up (eggs and candles 1s. each, one tin of milk 6s., cigarettes 5s. a dozen, whisky £5 a bottle ; but all these prices were more than doubled as the siege went on : eggs, for instance, going up to 4s. 6d. apiece, and I knew one last rose of whisky that fetched £12). The rains, too, were sometimes terrific, as when, on December 15th (Colenso day), a field-hospital's tents were suddenly flooded three feet deep in water, which washed over the sick and wounded,

<sup>1</sup> It is noticeable that in casual bombardment by these 33 guns only 33 men and 1 officer were killed outright. But 207 men and 25 officers were wounded.



and Major Donegan, the indefatigable medical officer in charge, ran past me crying, "Sure it's hopeless ! Hopeless ! I've just beheld me two orderlies swimmin' down-stream on me operatin' table ! "

So it went on from day to day. I rode steadily every day from point to point of the horseshoe position, built shelters for Steevens in his illness, helped to build sangars for the Imperial Light Horse on Waggon Hill, and especially enjoyed the ride up to their position, and to the Manchesters on Cæsar's Camp west of the town, from which one had a superb view far away to the precipices of the Drakensberg, and a great waterfall, spilt apparently from their very top in a thin white line. Often I thought of the life that Montaigne desired for himself—a life spent always in the saddle ; but there was the difference that I should probably have to eat my horse, though at that time Arthur McNalty, of the A.S.C. (formerly 3rd Dragoon Guards) had not yet invented his invaluable extract of horse called "Chevril."

And so January 6th came upon us—one of the most terrible among my days. For on that day the Boers had resolved at last to take the town by storm. Heavy firing began about three in the morning. By four I was far out near Observation Hill on the north-east of our position, supposing the main attack was there. And indeed the firing in that quarter was violent all day ; but I was mistaken. The main attack was upon the long ridge in the south-west, divided into Cæsar's Camp (from a supposed resemblance to the familiar position at Aldershot) and Waggon Hill (called from some stunted trees on the summit, looking like an out-spanned waggon). It was held by the 7th Brigade, under Colonel Ian Hamilton, as I said, and, perhaps because of the steepness on the reverse slope, the fortification along the edge of the summit had been neglected. One might have thought that Ian Hamilton, who had at Majuba seen what Boers could do by climbing up dead ground, would have been more cautious, but the only defences were a few low and scattered walls, a few circular sangars, and a big gun-pit

constructed for the "Lady Anne" gun, which had been brought up there when we were expecting Buller to break through at Colenso, and brought up again to the same position the day before this assault, but not fixed for action. She was at the extreme and highest point of Waggon Hill, where the Imperial Light Horse were stationed, with the 1st K.R.R. in support. A Naval 12-pounder had just been dragged up there, too, and placed in a gun-pit. As throughout the siege, Cæsar's Camp, separated from Waggon Hill by a long, flattish ridge, was held by the 1st Manchesters (Colonel Curran) and the 42nd Battery (Major Goulburn). The whole ridge from end to end absolutely commanded the town, and if the Boers could have held it they would have compelled our surrender or a fight to the last man within narrow central limits, which Sir George had already marked out.

The attack on this long ridge began about three in the morning, a picked body of Free State Boers climbing up dead ground to the assault on Waggon Hill, and a similar body of Transvaalers climbing up dead ground to the edge of Cæsar's Camp. At both points, extraordinary courage was displayed by both sides. A particularly savage contest raged around the "Lady Anne" gun-pit, where the Boers actually leaned over the parapet (I found their bodies there next morning) and fired point-blank into the space inside. It was there that old De Villiers, the Harrismith Commandant, shot the gigantic Major Miller-Wallnutt of the Gordons; was himself shot by Corporal Albrecht of the Light Horse, who was himself shot by a Boer Field Cornet, who was shot by Digby-Jones, the sapper, who, a little later, holding one of the small forts alone, shot three Boers with his revolver, and went for the fourth with the butt, but was killed. At dawn, Lord Ava, acting as galloper to Ian Hamilton, was mortally wounded by a bullet through the head while looking over a rock to discover where the main assault was coming. An Irish sergeant said to me on hearing the news, "You'd never have taken him for a lord."

He seemed quite a nice gentleman." And Lord Ava's delightful personality could have no better epitaph.

Colonel Dick-Cunyngham, of the Gordons, was mortally wounded by a spent bullet while hurrying his men up in support. Picket after picket was wiped out along the summit. From a little plain at the foot, the 53rd Battery (Major Abdy) did gallant service in perpetually shelling the end of Cæsar's Camp, round which the Transvaalers were always attempting to crawl, while all day the Bulwana "Long Tom" poured its vast shells upon that devoted Battery, till the ground around it was cut and dug into pits, and Abdy's men could scarcely stand.<sup>1</sup>

It would be impossible to exaggerate the courage of our gunners, our line regiments, and the Johannesburg men ; but do what they would, the Boers remained fixed upon the ridge, especially in the unoccupied and unfortified centre, whence they could enfilade our men on both sides, and they were supported by at least three big additions to the assault. We calculated that Free Staters and Transvaalers together numbered about 7000 men, and those of the best. I suppose it was about three o'clock in the afternoon that Sir George sent off the signal to Buller, "Very hard pressed"—a signal which, arriving next morning in London, struck gloom into English hearts, and roused some indignation at Scott Holland's anti-war sermon in St. Paul's that afternoon ; for it was Sunday.

But before evening the situation had been saved—saved by Sir George White's order to Colonel Park of the Devons to bring round three companies from their fortress on the Helpmakaar road and sweep the summit of Waggon Hill. It was about six o'clock, and rain was falling in tremendous torrents. Those stubborn Devons came tramping past me where I was watching at Range Post with the Royal Irish

<sup>1</sup> One whom I knew afterwards in hospital had a leg and arm on the same side carried away as he leant over a gun. The surgeon going round afterwards passed him over as hopeless, but the vital fellow, a red-haired Irishman from Kent, called out, "When are you going to do me up, doctor?" and he survived, though hardly capable of movement.

Fusiliers. Swinging to the left, they climbed the ridge, formed up in line under its cover, fixed bayonets, took open order and advanced to the open ground at the quick. Then, under a steady hail of bullets, they charged at the double—180 men of Devon, with the steel ready. Colonel Park himself led them, well in advance. He led them to within fifteen yards of the Boer firing-line, and then the Boers turned and fled, leaping down from the crest into the dead ground. But from both sides their retreat was covered by Boers hidden among the rocks, and it was then that some of the very best Devon officers, such as Lafone and Field, were killed. It was then, too, that Lieutenant Masterson, formerly a private and then colour-sergeant in the Irish Fusiliers, succeeded in carrying a message back for reinforcement on the left, though the wounds he received that day were said to number eleven. He survived and was given the V.C. He had already been granted a commission for gallantry in Egypt. His great-grandfather, coming of a fighting Irish stock, captured the French eagle at Barossa in the Peninsular War.<sup>1</sup>

By seven o'clock the extremity of peril was passed. We had lost 14 officers and 100 men killed outright, and 22 officers and 220 men wounded. Next morning we collected and buried the dead, British and Boer, the Boers coming up under truce and carrying away their own. Our dead made a terrible line as we arranged them in order. Among them were many officers I had come to know in my daily rounds, especially Major Mackworth of the Queen's (attached to the K.R.R.), who, simply to encourage the men, had gone up to the summit at the worst moment of the attack, walking-stick in hand, and was killed at once. No less pathetic was the appearance of the Boer dead; many of them rough old farmers, with wrinkled and kindly faces, hardened by sun and weather. They were dressed in flannel shirts, rough old

<sup>1</sup> Willie Maud made a fine sketch of the Devon charge, and afterwards painted a picture of it, which, I suppose, still hangs in the mess-room of the 1st Devons.



jackets of brown cloth, rough trousers with braces, weather-stained, sweated slouch hats, every variety of boot or "veldt shoes," and usually no socks. How immeasurably superior to our millionaire "Helots" they looked and were !

So January 6th was a terrible day, but January 15th was to me almost sadder. Three days before, Maud and I had been talking to Steevens about the good time we would have down at Mooi River, recovering, when the relief came. He was well on the way to convalescence, and very cheerful. Next day came a sudden change. We believed afterwards that his orderly in kindness gave him a bit of biscuit ; for, like all convalescents in enteric, he was desperately hungry. (A few weeks later a Colonel in the hospital where I was, actually bribed his servant to smuggle in food for him, and he nearly died in delirium.) Anyhow, "perforation" showed itself by unmistakable signs. Strychnine was injected and he revived for a while, took some champagne, and when warned against talking said, "You are in command. I'll do what you like. We are going to pull through." But between four and five in the afternoon of the 15th he passed from sleep into death. At midnight we buried him in the little cemetery. All the correspondents were there, with Colonel Stoneman and David Henderson to represent Headquarters. About twenty-five of us, all mounted, followed the little glass hearse with its black and white embellishments. The few soldiers and sentries whom we passed halted and gave the last salute. There was a full moon, covered with clouds that let the light through at their misty edges. A soft rain fell as we lowered the coffin by thin ropes into the grave. The Boer searchlight on Bulwana was sweeping the half-circle of the English defences from end to end, and now and then it opened its full white eye upon us, as though the enemy wondered what we were doing there. We were laying in a strange land an Englishman of assured, though unaccomplished, genius, whose heart had still been full of hopes and generosity ; one who had not lost the

affections and charm of youth, nor been dulled either by success or disappointment :

*“ From the contagion of the world's slow stain  
He is secure ; and now can never mourn  
A heart grown old, a head grown grey, in vain—  
Nor when the spirit's self has ceased to burn  
With sparkless ashes load an unlamented urn.”*

But the worst tragedy of war is that the beloved friend drops out, and one can only say “ Poor fellow ! Poor fellow ! ” Day follows day, and the army goes forward with its routine.

For the remaining six weeks of the siege, day followed day without conspicuous event. Till overcome by fever, I spent part of each on Observation Hill, whence one had a fine view of Taba Nyama (Black Mountain), a ridge about twelve miles away upon our side of the Tugela and nearly parallel with it, where Buller in the latter part of January was trying to force a way through. The range is nine miles long ; the left or eastern extremity is called Mabedhlane (the Paps) by the natives, from its two pointed equal hills ; in the centre of the range is the fatal position of Spion Kop. Day by day one could follow the varying fortunes of that prolonged struggle, judging by the position of the Boer waggons and laagers, as they were moved forward or back. Through the Naval telescope, one could also see shells bursting upon the hill-sides, and sometimes men like little black dots moving about. One day (Jan. 25th) our hopes fell as we watched a large party of men (some said fifty, some a hundred and fifty) being marched across the Great Plain between us and the mountain ridge, and passing so near our outposts that they almost came within range of our guns. No Boer goes on foot, and no Boers march in fours. Undoubtedly they were British prisoners trudging on their way to the “ bird-cages ” of Pretoria. Then, from day to day, hope gradually faded, until we agreed never to mention Buller again, but to settle down to avert starvation as long as possible.

It was at this crisis that Arthur McNalty saved so many lives by his invention of "Chevril," or essence of horse. For his service, twenty-eight horses a day were killed, only the horses for the guns being carefully preserved to the end. The rest were driven from their proper lines much to their astonishment and distress, and turned out to pick up what they could in the camp and surroundings, the Indians doing good service by venturing outside the limits to grub up grass and bring it to each poor animal till its turn for slaughter came. MacNalty converted the station engine-shed into his factory, using iron coal trolleys without their wheels for cauldrons, into which the vast fragments of our Arab steeds were thrown to boil. By boiling and evaporation under punkahs, an extract was made yielding three pints of soup to the pint of extract, and ultimately, with the aid of the little hydrochloric and pepsine left in the town, a true essence was extracted, and made into a brown or even white jelly for the sick. A peculiar flavour of almonds was given to the jelly by the addition of hair-oil from the hairdresser's shop, and when a little later I was laid in hospital with a deadly illness, I was nurtured by this unusual mixture, which smelt like a vulgar woman's hair and neighed in the throat. The Kaffirs and Colonial Volunteers refused horse even in this enticing form, but the British soldier took to it like a vulture, and begged for the lumps of stewed flesh from which the soup was boiled. Fine jokes he made as he carried away the pail! "Mind that stuff; it kicks!"—one can imagine the English humour. But, as he said, he did get a chance of filling—well, we know what he or anyone else would always like to fill.

But joke as Englishmen in adversity always must, the condition of the men was deplorable during the last month. They became pale and bloodless as ghosts. They wandered about with bent knees, unable to stand upright. They ate the garden pomegranates green and raw. They ate everything, even grass. They gathered all sunflower seeds to smoke. They smoked the unravelled fringes of their tents

and the tea leaves left in the camp kettles. They told me the leaves gave them "an 'ot taste." All were, of course, covered with lice. Enteric and dysentery wore them down. Some were bitten by the tarantula spider; some blinded with great agony by the spitting snake (*Rinkholz* in Dutch; *Mbamba Twan* or "child catcher" in Zulu), which, anticipating "tear gas," spits poison into the eyes, producing total blindness for a time. But all preserved the patience of our working people, and the humour which is the piquant sauce of patience. Throughout the siege a wretched Colonial had gone about telling us all we were sure to be blown to pieces soon, and asking the soldiers when they were going to run for it. In the end Colonel Park, of the Devons, had him shut up in gaol for "causing despondency," and a good thing too. But I do not think he ever caused any.

I had hoped to live each day of the siege, not "as 'twere my last," as Bunyan advised, but with full vitality, interrupted only by my usual bouts of fever and rheumatism. But on February 9th the Hindus carried me away in a dhoolie to a hospital in a Congregational chapel, and there I lay for a fortnight in high fever, suffering an extremity of pain, only relieved by boiling my head in hot water, and by occasional blessings of morphia, such as we and the Germans bestowed upon our men in the Great War, and as the authorities appear to allow to a woman about to be killed by the State butcher. Frank Rhodes, Captain Lambton, and many other officers, men, clerks, and civilians visited me every day, bringing the little news there was to bring. With me in hospital were Major Altham, Colonel Curran of the Manchesters, Captain Walker (Irish surgeon to the Gordons, whose delirious outcries ended in a blessed silence when he died), and that Sergeant-Gunner Boseley, mentioned before, whom I had taken for drives in my cart because he was a mere motionless fragment, with only four inches left of arm and six inches of thigh, both on one side. And there were about fifty others, including a shaggy old man, who told me he was the one survivor of the first ship



that sailed with settlers from the Cape to Natal. While I thus lay among the sick and dying, nothing of importance occurred in the besieged position, except that the Staff watched with interest and alarm a host of Kaffirs working upon the Klipp River below the Intombi Camp, trying to dam up the stream and flood the town.

Happily for us, their labours were cut short by the heavy fighting through the pass from the Tugela by Pieter's Hill, where day after day Buller was making his final effort at relief. Even up to February 27th all seemed so uncertain that rations were again cut down after a brief increase. But next day, from every point of observation, one could see the Boer waggons trekking away, the laagers breaking up, and, what was still better, the "Long Toms" being removed, under heavy fire of our Naval battery. And as I returned from King's Post into the central street of the town, I saw—God's mercy! what were these strange figures riding on fat, shining, luscious horses? They were Lord Dundonald and his small party of mixed Irregulars—Imperial Light Horse and Natal Volunteers—who had galloped forward in front of Buller's advance. Cheer? Of course we cheered. But it was a thin and wavering cheer, such as the ghosts in Hades raised when they saw the solid and material form of Ulysses or Æneas enter their shadowy home.

The siege had lasted one hundred and eighteen days, and now it was over. In various slightly antiquated inns and lodging-houses one still may admire a picture representing Buller and White meeting with enthusiastic grip of hands, while lusty crowds applaud the patriotic triumph. Nothing of the kind happened. On March 1st Buller came secretly into the camp, and departed unrecognised. I suppose it was then that, when urged to pursue the fleeing Boers, he replied, "Damn pursuit." In condemnation of that neglect, one of his Staff officers afterwards silently pointed out to me the Red Book sentence: "The General who refuses to pursue a beaten enemy on the plea that his troops

are tired should be at once relieved of his command." Sir George White was of different stuff. Mustering every man and horse that could crawl, he marched us out in column along the Newcastle road, in the hope of cutting off the Boer's retreat at their railhead by Modder Spruit. I have seen many miserable and pathetic marches, but none so heartrending as that. The men looked like parodies of death. They were so weak they could not straighten their knees, but erept with legs doubled under them. Along the whole route one saw them falling out and falling down by the roadside. Even the gunner horses were so thin they could hardly stir the guns. Their riders were so thin they could hardly sit the horses for pain. Yet, like a line of resurrected skeletons, the column crawled and stumbled on. When the enemy runs, the General's first and only duty is to pursue, and for three, almost for four, miles we pursued. We reached Limit Hill, with its fatal memories of Black Monday. And as we reached it, we saw the last Boer train steam unmolested away towards the Transvaal frontier. Buller, with his fresh cavalry and his guns drawn by those luscious horses—what might not he have accomplished? I still believe that, with one day's energetic pursuit, he could have brought the end of the war within sight. But "Damn pursuit," said Buller.

Two days later, with all the pomp of his active, healthy, and victorious army, he celebrated a triumphant entry into the suffering town. Sir George White's garrison lined the route in his honour. Unable to stand, they sat down upon the edges of the road. On the steps of the battered town hall, Sir George was waiting, surrounded by his Staff. I happened to be sitting on the kerb exactly opposite. As Buller passed, Sir George and all the Staff saluted. But Buller turned his head away and made no response. For all that appeared he might have been taking more interest in myself! The siege was indeed over. White and his Staff departed; Buller and his Staff reigned in their stead. And oh, the difference!

NOTE.—The following extracts from the official statistics may be of interest. At the beginning of the siege Ladysmith contained over 20,000 souls, 9800 horses and mules, 2500 oxen, and a few hundred sheep. By the foresight of Colonel Edward Ward and Colonel Stoneman, large quantities of provisions had been rushed up by train just before the siege began, without tally or reckoning. These consisted of flour, preserved meat, biscuits, tea, coffee, sugar, salt, maize (mealies), bran, oats, hay and some “medical comforts,” besides ghi, goor, and atta for the Indian contingent.

At the beginning of the siege the scale of rations for soldiers of all ranks and civilians alike was :—

Bread  $1\frac{1}{4}$  lb., or biscuit 1 lb.

Fresh meat  $1\frac{1}{4}$  lb., or preserved meat 1 lb.

Coffee 1 oz., or tea  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz.

Sugar 3 oz.

Salt  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz.

Pepper 1-36th oz.

Vegetablos (compressed) 1 oz., or potatoes  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb.

Cheese, bacon, and jam were sometimes issued as extras. And I sometimes think that my strong letters upon the soldier's craving for jam or other sweet things persuaded the authorities in the Great War to make jam a regular part of rations.

The lowest rations just before the end were :—

For Whites :  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. biscuit, maize meal 3 oz.

For Indians and Kaffirs : Maize meal 8 oz.

Europeans : Fresh meat (chiefly horse) 1 lb.

For Kaffirs : Fresh meat (chiefly horse)  $1\frac{3}{4}$  lb.

For white men : Coffee or tea 1-12th oz., salt  $\frac{1}{8}$  oz., sugar 1 oz.

For Indians : A little rice. (The Indians refused to eat flesh either of ox or horse.)

During the siege everything possible in the way of provisions and cattle was requisitioned, and the milk was kept for the sick. These requisitions created much indignation among the inhabitants, who always hoped to make a good business out of the rise in prices, and found their speculative instincts thwarted by a fair but compulsory sale. When Colonel Stoneman requisitioned a cow on one occasion, for instance, he showed me the answer, which ran :

“SIR,—Neither you nor anyone else shall take my cow. If you want milk for your sick, apply to Joubert for it. Get out with you, and get your milk from the Dutch.”

Alas ! The cow was taken at a price, and again a loyal subject discovered that “loyalty didn't pay.”

Some statistics of ammunition are also interesting. Out of 556 shells for the 4.7 Naval guns only 42 were left at the end of the siege ; and out of 1036 for the Naval 12-prs. only 252. Of the 11,437 shells for the 15-prs. guns 3705 were expended ; and of the 5,678,716 rounds for the .303 rifles only 213,400. The last item proves how little used the rifle was, except on the days of general assault.

Among the Naval and Military forces, apart from civilians, there were 1766 cases of enteric, and 393 deaths from it ; 1857 cases of dysentery, and 117 deaths ; the total number of killed was 18 officers and 193 men ; wounded 70 officers and 559 men ; died of wounds 8 officers and 51 men.

The civilians suffered severely from enteric and dysentery, but I have not got the statistics. There were 33 premature births owing to the shock of shells, up to the beginning of February.



## CHAPTER XII

### PRETORIA

*"Lo, I have seen the open hand of God ;  
And in it nothing, nothing, save the rod  
Of mine affliction, and the eternal hate."*

Hecuba in the "Troades "

(Gilbert Murray's translation).

AS soon as I gathered strength enough to stand with security, I drove my little cart down to Colenso, and there with Frank Rhodes went over the fatal scene of December 15th, tracing the course of the battle by the skeletons of the horses still lying where they fell beside the guns. A train took me on to Durban, where all the other correspondents of the siege were gathered, under orders to join Lord Roberts in Bloemfontein—all except Willie Maud, who had developed enteric and was lying deadly ill up at the sand-ridge called Berea. I alone was allowed to see him, and I telegraphed for his beautiful French wife to come out, which she did. After some weeks he recovered to all appearance, but, as he well knew, the disease had left him with a clot of blood that might be fatal at any time, and was fatal after a day of heroic gallantry in the Somaliland campaign—a gallantry that would have gained him the V.C. if he had not been only a war correspondent. (That was in May, 1903.)

I naturally expected to be ordered round with the rest to join the advance upon Pretoria, but while I was shut up in the siege, Massingham had honourably resigned rather than support Chamberlain's war policy, a new editor had been appointed, and at the first possible opportunity I was made to feel the difference. I had worked hard during the siege, had sent out long messages by Kaffirs, who some-

times got through, and had signalled by the helio as many words as were permitted whenever sun and Headquarters allowed. I half expected a telegram of congratulation on my survival, if not on my work. But when I telegraphed for instructions, saying I supposed I had better go with the others to the Free State front, I was answered by sneers, taunts, complaints, and orders to return to Ladysmith and attach myself to Buller. Telegrams in that tone were three times repeated, and then I began to realise the distinction between one editor and another, and to understand that the greatness of a paper depends upon its editor alone. It is true that the new editor did not know that my long account of the relief had been stolen with Stuart's saddle on his way down, nor did I know it at the time. But to sneer and taunt and send me back to Ladysmith was no proof of sympathetic imagination.

There was no help for it ; so back I went to that sphere of ghosts, after a bare week's enjoyment of beds with sheets, and bread with butter, and bathing without shells. In Ladysmith, now haunted by the spirits of so many friends, and by the memories of so many terrible events, I was kept for two months longer, almost alone and almost idle. Nor was it only ghosts that pervaded the hideously familiar scene. The whole place reeked of death's smell, while enteric and dysentery increased rather than diminished. Surrounded with sick or dead men and horses, one did not know whether to call the little town a cemetery, a hospital, or a slaughter-house. Most of the regiments in the old division were detained there like myself. They were taken some distance out of the town, and put under the command of Neville Lyttelton ; but they shrank with death, and the siege horses of the cavalry brigade under Brocklehurst never recovered.

Almost as hard to bear as the circumambient atmosphere of death and ghosts was the uncomfortable atmosphere surrounding Buller and his Staff. It gave me the feeling one has upon entering a house inhabited by a man and

woman long married and long hostile. Up at his quarters, in the old hospital on the top of the hill above the town, I could see Buller sitting silent, grumpy, and irritable as a worried bear. His was a peculiar nature. His very name inspired confidence ; so did his heavy impenetrable face, and his back like a mountain side. The Boers called him "The Red Bull," and also compared him, as he ran to and fro up and down the Tugela, to a big rat trying to get into a barn. It must have been a strange scene when, after failing with heavy loss at Colenso, and failing again with heavy loss at Spion Kop, he made a speech to his army as it stood drawn up in hollow square on the 29th of January. There he sat, impassive and unstirred, with all his failures thick upon him. He began to speak. The sentences came blundering out, abrupt, disconnected, ungrammatical. He said something about thanks, and something about the discovery of a key. Yes, his men "had helped him to the discovery of a key !" Not a soul present knew what he meant, nor has anyone since found out his meaning. To the whole of his army the speech was unintelligible ; he might as well have been speaking Zulu. But that made no difference. The men received those halting, meaningless words with an outburst of applause such as rewards no eloquence. Inspired with an enthusiasm of devotion unreasoning as a lover's, off the army set to lay down their lives for their General in his next deadly failure, which began next day.

I once compared him to a 6-inch "cow-gun"—how slowly it moves, how impassive it looks ! But what moral effect it has on its own side ! In Buller his soldiers found the very type of their nation—the kind of man that every Englishman would wish to be if fortune allowed—solid of form, brave above suspicion, silent, and indifferent to rhetoric, undemonstrative and unemotional, unyielding in disaster, but under that imperturbable appearance bearing a kindly heart ; always careful of his army's comfort ; a model landlord ; "a farmer by profession," as he used

to boast himself, but converted into a General by the Providence that watches over the good old English gentleman. Those are qualities not to be despised, and after the war many Boers told me they thought Buller our greatest general, because he had the toughest task to fulfil and fulfilled it. And yet, in addition to all those fine old English qualities—the qualities that our family life and public-school training aim at producing, and do produce—one more thing was needed to make a great General. In the German Staff's Official History of the South African War, where it criticises Colenso, we read :

“ Buller was no longer a leader but merely a fellow-combatant ; no longer a general, but only a battery-commander. The physically brave man had succumbed morally to the impressions of the battle-field. It was the general and not his gallant force that was defeated.”

One of Napoleon's “ Maxims of War ” further reveals the cause of failure :

“ The first qualification in a general is a cool head—a head that receives just impressions and estimates things and objects at their real value. He must never allow himself to be elated by good news or depressed by bad.”

Time after time Buller allowed himself to be elated or depressed—especially depressed. But after his ultimate success in raising the siege, it is hard to understand why he sat so sulky there among his Staff, uttering hardly a growl. Perhaps it was the same reason that made him ignore White upon the triumphal entry. He had expected to be Commander-in-Chief during the war. His plan of campaign for a march upon Bloemfontein and Pretoria was thwarted by the necessity of relieving Ladysmith, and when that took so long a time, the Government sent Roberts out in full command. The subordination was bitter, and there Buller sat and glared, triumphant and disheartened.

At his side was his Military Secretary, Frederiek Stopford, known for his knowledge of the laws of war, and to be known later at Suvla Bay. But I did not become intimate with



him or with any of the Staff at that time, not even with Stephen Pollen, who was then my Censor and whom I met long afterwards as Military Secretary to Sir Ian Hamilton in the Dardanelles. David Henderson remained for a time as Intelligence officer, but he was almost the only Staff officer whom I knew, and the days and weeks dragged wearily on into weeks and months of heartbreaking inactivity. Having purchased Steevens' tent, I pitched it on a fairly sweet-smelling spot just outside the town, and there I waited. The exasperating monotony was chiefly broken by a brief visit to Maritzburg, where I was the guest of Colonel Stoneman of the A.S.C., quartered up in Fort Napier, in the very midst of an enteric hospital, and much occupied in minute precautions against the disease, of which he died soon afterwards. I also went scouting with George Roos, my subaltern in the Cadet Battalion of the Queen's in Shadwell. He had joined Thornycroft's Horse, and been wounded at Spion Kop, still having in his thigh a bullet, which his mother hoped was not an explosive one. Scouting among the complicated hills and valleys north of Ladysmith with small mounted parties was certainly a great delight, for I soon discovered that Nature had intended me for a scout, having endowed me with keen sight and an instinct for direction. But the Boers made only one or two small attacks upon that northern position beyond Elandsplaagte, and they came to nothing. Some variety was added by the horse-sickness, which cost me two of my best horses, though not the talking horse. I had bought a nice grey mare from a Colonel for £25, but one day, after about three weeks, I noticed she was sluggish, and would not run straight, but kept forging from one side to the other. Next day she would not eat. On the third day the fatal orange discharge from the nostrils began, and grew slowly worse. I washed it out three times a day, but it still kept trickling down and dripping on the ground. Her eyes became full of flies, and once I took over twenty out of each. On the seventh day her breathing was very

heavy, and she was black as a corpse with flies, which she had no strength to shake off. On the tenth day she died. With another, a much bigger animal, the disease ran a similar course. No cure had then been found, and only two per cent of the horses once infected recovered. The microbe seems to lie in heavy dew, especially upon long grass where gossamers hang. After rain the grass is free from danger, and where it has been cropped very short, as during the siege, the risk is less. But I kept my horses closely tied up to my cart till after the sun had dried the dew, and yet two out of four died. I heard of a farmer who tried aconite with good effect, but I cannot speak of that for certain.

Sometimes, too, a religious interest was added to the broiling day by the burial of a Zulu who had died of enteric or dysentery. The body was rolled out of a blanket into a hole, and earth shovelled upon it. The religious rite consisted in a careful wash of all who had taken part in the ceremony; but if his relations had been present, and the burial in his own district, they would have buried him standing up or sitting down, and would have howled awhile around the spot. The Zulus believe, not exactly in immortality, but in the return of the dead in the form of snakes, which haunt the kraal for a time, and then disappear into nothingness. A queer point in the belief is that the better the man, the more venomous is the snake—not, one would have thought, an encouragement to a virtuous life; unless, indeed, the hope of taking vengeance upon relations after death encourages virtue. The ceremonies of the Hindoos working at the railway were more definitely religious, and one night the perpetual throbbing of a tom-tom announced something specially esoteric. “Sergeant,” said the captain of the depot, “take a corporal down and stop that infernal din.” So off the two went together, but in half an hour returned limping and bruised and battered. “Well?” said the captain.

“You see, sir,” explained the sergeant, “this is how it was: so soon as me and him got down, Corporal Turner he

jumps on the tom-tom and busts it in, whiles I kep' on hittin' the natives over the head so as they all ran in their tents. But the minute as they see we was only two of us, out they comes by hundreds, chatterin' and shriekin', and gets round us with sticks. That's how it was."

"And what were they doing?" asked the captain.

"Beggin' your pardon, sir, they was worshippin' of the Ganges."

With such occasional reliefs I sat disconsolate, waiting on events. I supposed, no doubt rightly, that Buller was kept inactive until his advance into the Transvaal should coincide with Lord Roberts' advance from Bloemfontein towards Pretoria, though many maintained we were doomed to stop where we were, with our army of 35,000 men, till Roberts had occupied the capital and made peace. But suddenly, on May 3rd, I received a telegram with one of those orders that fill a correspondent's heart with amused dismay. It instructed me to join Roberts at Bloemfontein by crossing direct into the Orange Free State, without going round by the coast to a British base. The only direct routes from Ladysmith into the Free State were either by way of Van Reenen's Pass to Harrismith, which the Boers held in force; or by climbing the precipices of the Drakensberg into Basutoland and trying to elude the Boers upon the Free State frontier there—which meant eluding De Wet! It was the sort of instruction that looks so simple and natural in Fleet Street. Similar instructions used to reach me in Sofia during the Balkan War of 1912, when at two in the morning a crash would come at my door: "Telegram! Telegram!" and I would read: "Send full column on fighting," when the fighting had not even begun, and the Bulgarian H.Q. Staff kept us all fifty miles behind the future front.

It was somewhere in South Africa that a true Englishman told me he always turned his shirt inside out and back again every day; for, referring to liee, he added, "It's the return journey as breaks their little hearts!" It is ignorant

instructions that break a correspondent's little heart, and my proposal to obey them created such laughter at Headquarters that for one afternoon they seemed quite cheerful. Though always inclined to obedience, I was not such a fool as to hand my paper's correspondent over to the enemy, and so I went in all haste to Durban again. But finding no ship was to sail for over a week, I took the opportunity of seeing something of Zululand, and even that glimpse was worth the while. Crossing the old Tugela, I mounted Her Majesty's mail-bags and drove with eight horses through low hills and scattered bush for about thirty miles to Eshowè, the station of our Resident, Mr. Saunders, Governor of the best English type, sympathetic, hard-working, inflexibly just, and above suspicion. Round him was gathered a little colony of English people, and on the first day that I was there they opened a tin house as Club, with a little reading-room and a largish bar, capable of extension.

So there in the afternoon we sat drinking tea and talking sport, as in a rectory garden at home. But it was the Zulus out in the country who interested me. Savage warfare and careful infanticide had produced in them the finest physical type of mankind. Men and women all appeared superb in strength and form, happy in spirit and much given to laughter. In those days they numbered less than a quarter million in their own land, but under peace and good government they were increasing at an ominous rate, and there was no check to the population except the hut-tax. As a fresh hut had always to be built for each wife in a kraal, the hut-tax was really a tax on marriage, and it was levied on the left-hand huts, which were all but proper, just as strictly as upon the right-hand huts, which were proper up to respectable standard. Thus, as in all other countries, polygamy was limited by expense.

A wife cost so many oxen to start with, and the father of a really first-class, high-born girl would get a whole span of sixteen oxen for her at a value of £15 to £20 apiece.



And then the hut-tax was about 14s. a year, so that the most domestic of men was obliged to be careful. It was true he could go to the gold mines and bring back wages either for purchase or tax, and many of the young Zulus went. Or he could run a little rickshaw in Durban, leaping along as he pulled it, with strange cries and antics, and adorned with a pair of buffalo horns on his head. But as soon as enough wealth was gathered for an establishment of four or five wives, he laid himself out for happiness, and needed to work no more. The wives did the work, and the kingly sex sat beside the Kaffir-beer, encouraging them in their virtuous course ; or adorned with beads and armed with a sheaf of sticks and a buckhide shield, the husband went bounding through the valleys wild, seeking yet another helpmate to reinforce their labours. The finest savage I thus saw go a-wooing had lashed a sixpenny looking-glass to his arm, and so was irresistible. Living was very cheap, for the whole nation lived on mealie-meal, and mealies grew wherever you scratched the ground. Perhaps once a month the family enjoyed a treat in the shape of a cow's head, but though the children were usually blown out like balloons with mealies, the whole race was fine propaganda for the vegetarian, and for life in the sun and air.

Here, as elsewhere, the great Black Problem was growing under peace. The Zulus were a warrior race, mindful of ancestral traditions. They knew all about their king, Chaka, whose Spartan laws had created the conquering tribe that swept Natal of its old population. They were supposed to be disarmed, but at every hunt each Zulu managed to produce an assegai or two, and no baby waddled forth without at least two sharpened sticks. We were training five hundred superb savages to the use of rifles, and I saw a Company at drill in the barracks. They had great difficulty in standing still and looking to their front. Unable to count above five or six, they had to number up to four and then start afresh with one, in order to form fours correctly. When they were dismissed they bounded away

with yells and laughter. But physically they put any battalion of Guards to shame, and in the bayonet exercise they brought down their polished brown legs with a stamp as in a native war-dance. Round the square squatted their naked women, uttering applause at the performance with long cries of admiration. For at heart the whole race cared for nothing but pleasure and war. Of gain they took no account, but were supremely delighted with this glorious world. Full of humour as fat puppies, they were always chaffing each other, and displayed their human affection by constantly shaking hands. When they laughed, one saw a sudden gleam of teeth, like white lightning in a thunder-cloud. But war they loved too—war and hunting. For lions, leopards, and hippos still abounded, and many beautiful kinds of deer had escaped the rifle and the rinderpest. There were deadly snakes in the stretches of forest, and crocodiles in all the rivers. Splendid butterflies hovered among the flowers, and turkey-buzzards, toucans, and many strange birds came close up to the huts.

I further observed that the war had influenced feminine fashions, and just as the English ladies had then adopted khaki, the Zulu ladies had adopted the Commissariat sack, which made an excellent “body” and partial skirt. About the middle, back and front, it was marked with a large round “O,” which was pleasingly decorative, and stood for “Oats.”

At last I got away from Durban in the same ship which was taking Maud home with his wife. But I had to disembark at East London, and was kept there for some days owing to the usual troubles over passes and transport. Perhaps even those troubles were a kind of blessing deeply disguised, for I was overcome by a ghastly attack of what the doctors called “Malarial or famine jaundice,” which I count among the most wretched diseases in the world. For more than a fortnight it kept me deeply miserable, but though the doctors foretold all manner of deaths, I overcame it at last by living on nothing but “Brand’s Extract” of

sheep, and by persistently moving on whenever possible. By train I crept through Stormberg (where Gataere's fine energy had involved disaster) and Burghersdorp (enthusiastically Boer), to Bloemfontein, where I found that Roberts had gone far ahead with the army, and Kitchener refused permission for anything but food to follow by train. Buying the last cart, the last horse, and the last can of milk, I started to follow in pursuit, and in the end I overtook Roberts in Johannesburg, having covered the three hundred miles in ten days. It was a difficult trek. Two of the horses died; once the dissel-boom (pole) of the cart broke in half; food for the horses and the two men fell short (happily I was too ill to want any for myself); sometimes we could find no water; and sometimes we had to trek far into the night, smelling our way by the carcasses of horses strewn along the route where the army had passed. Here and there we came up with various bodies and details on the way—the Berkshire Mounted Infantry, Lovat's Scouts, Lumsden's Horse, Canadian Horse, Brabant's Horse, Australian Roughriders, and so on, besides people of importance such as the Duke of Norfolk and the Earl of Airlie, who was hurrying to his death at Diamond Hill.

But as a rule there was solitude enough as we passed over the level plateau of the Orange Free State, broken here and there by a few rocky kopjes which rise from an ancient sea-bed. The trickling of slow streams has worked the surface into low waves of land, covered for miles on miles with coarse grass, then brown and dry, but from a distance showing a purple flush like heather. The veldt was almost uninhabited except by various cranes, a red-legged plover, hundreds of vultures, a bushy-tailed marmot, and, near water, a weaver-bird, then building its tubular nest, though it was mid-winter. Of the game that used to swarm over the veldt, only a few little antelopes or springbok were left. But if in the trough of the grass waves I saw a small group of trees—eucalyptus or weeping-willow, the typical tree of South Africa—I knew there was water there, and



CHRISTIAN DE WET (THIRD FROM RIGHT) AND HIS STAFF





that there some Dutchman long ago had pitched his lonely home.

On June 1st I crossed the Vaal, by Viljoen's Drift at Vereeniging. I was three days behind the army, and the trek had been hard and painful. But what were my pains to compare with the torture of the army transport ? In an official history of the war we read : " In May, 44,000 men and 203 guns were disposable for the advance to Pretoria. On the 27th the main body crossed the Vaal." To me those simple words call up a vision of loose sand over which for ten miles the heavy guns and supply waggons had to be dragged before the river was reached. I wonder if more suffering was ever crowded into so short a space. Ten years' bull-fighting in Spain could not make up its sum. Sixteen oxen went to a load, or, for the big guns, twenty-two. Knee-deep in sand they ploughed their way, the wheels often hidden to the axle. In front a Kaffir guided the span, another held the ropes upon the waggon, a third walked at the side with an enormous raw-hide whip. All yelled and screamed in the language that oxen best understand. If the waggon stuck, all the Kaffirs around stood by with their whips and lashed the living hides into great lines and gashes. The oxen bellowed and groaned, writhing backward and forward, trying in vain to tear themselves from the yokes and the heavy chain which runs down the centre of a span. Many rolled over, dead of pain and terror ; many lay down and let man do his worst. These were shot or pole-axed, and others took their places. But usually, when torture reached a certain pitch, the waggon moved, the purpose of strategy was accomplished, and the main body crossed the Vaal. Such sights are a necessary part of war ; for Napoleon in one of his " Maxims of War " observed : " The strength of an army, like the power in mechanics, is estimated by multiplying the mass by the rapidity." So, for the sake of the multiplication, the oxen had to be rapid.

On June 2nd I rode straight through Johannesburg, which appeared to me a city much like Hell or South Staf-

fordshire, except that the refuse-heaps were white instead of black. And late at night I came to Orange Grove, where Roberts had pitched his headquarters, outside the town on the Pretoria road. Far in front of me stretched a wide expanse of country leading up to the mountains of the Northern Transvaal. Hidden in the midst of it lay Pretoria, but I counted eight lines of burning veldt between us and our goal ; for the Boers were burning the last vestiges of withered grass in the vain hope of starving our horses, as though following the tactics of the Russians at Moscow. I had received strict orders to report myself to the head Censor the very moment I arrived, but perhaps I obeyed orders too scrupulously ; for I did not discover Lord Stanley (now Lord Derby, 1923) till two in the morning. After searching throughout the vast camp, I then found him stretched on his little bed, sleeping like a blessed cherub, with his genial face exposed to the dew and stars, and when I woke him, he did not appear to appreciate the duty of rigid obedience at its full value. Just after dawn, however, I was cheered by the sight of Lord Roberts riding down the road towards Pretoria in front of his little Staff, having Kitchener on his right. A cheering sight his figure always was, so small and thin and alert, so capable, and possessing the true General's inexplicable power of inspiring men confidently to die. And, as Napoleon said, a man must have pretty strong motives *pour se faire tuer*.

Moving forward with the firing-line that day and the next, I was well up for the start into Pretoria on June 5th. But early that morning an open four-wheeler drove up, flying a white flag, and two Boer civilian officials made the surrender of the city in due form. The Coldstream Guards, followed by the Grenadier Guards, marched in at once to protect the public buildings and prevent disturbance. Going with them, I entered the main square, which is surrounded by the Government buildings, the Post Office, the Raad House, the Dutch Church, and Banks. There I was at once encompassed by an inquisitive but apprehensive

crowd, who had heard horrible stories of the atrocities committed by British troops in Bloemfontein and Johannesburg—pitiless executions, violation of women, mutilation of children. Nothing worse had ever been said of Turks in all their savagery, and such tales are invariably spread in war time to encourage resistance or revenge, without which war could hardly continue; for the military spirit must always be nurtured upon the lies recently known as “propaganda.” But seeing me seated in their midst, apparently quite harmless, the populace began pressing food from their pockets upon me, and drinks, and dozens of cigarettes, as though to propitiate the wrath of the God of Empire, at the same time imploring me to allow them a return home, and to protect their property from plunder. As they insisted upon taking me for the Commanding Officer, I reassured them as best I could in a mixture of English and German, and continued to ride slowly about among the crowd till Roberts should arrive.

At two o'clock the dispositions were complete, the great square cleared, and the Grenadier Guards set to guard the route with fixed bayonets. A body of Mounted Infantry, headed by Walker of the 42nd, who was Staff Signalling Officer in Ladysmith days, cantered across the square, and Lord Roberts was seen coming down the broad street from the station. He wore the ordinary khaki uniform and helmet, and rode a restless little Arab. For the first time I noticed a look of age upon him as he took the salutes of the battalions marching past. But his interest did not flag, and he never moved his eyes off the men, appearing to examine each battalion with an affectionate care, very different from Kitchener's massive indifference and from the general boredom of the other Staff officers. He was standing opposite the main entrance to the Government Buildings, a pseudo-classic edifice three stories high, with a big cupola and clock, surmounted by a gilded statue of a woman armed with helmet and battle-axe, perhaps intended for Justice, but serving almost equally well for



Britannia. Across the face of the building ran the motto, "Eendragt makt Magt," and above it arose a white flagstaff. Before the march past began, two officers stood on a balcony over the door, busy with ropes. There was absolute silence on the square, the men standing with shouldered arms and fixed bayonets. Presently the ropes began to move, and a little bit of silk went fluttering up to the top of the pole and stuck there, lapping itself round a rope so that it could hardly be seen. But it was the emblem of Empire. "General Salute. Present Arms!" The Guards played the National Anthem. All saluted in perfect silence. "Shoulder Arms. Order Arms!" The cheers broke out, soldiers hoisting their helmets on their bayonets, shouting and cheering again and again.

Then the markers were set and the old Army marched past—Coldstream Guards, Grenadier Guards, Naval Brigade, various Colonials, Highlanders, and the Welshman's goat. They marched begrimed with dirt; red, white, and black with variegated dust; stained with oil. Their uniforms torn and worn into holes; savagely bearded, gaunt, grim, and steeled with hunger, hard marching, and endurance; sober for want of drink, solemnised by long proximity to death; the offspring of the British poor. It was a moment of triumph, though the triumph was not yet final. But as I rode away to another part of the town, I heard the sound of a finer triumph still. In one of the Boer houses, someone was playing a Beethoven Sonata, I think it was the gay last movement of the "Waldstein." "Do your worst," the music said to me. "Let your generals and your troops and your guns and your horses do their worst with all their might and all their raging! I am something beyond your reach, something you can never touch, something that will endure in its perfection for ages after your cheers are silent, and your throbbing blood is dry." Yet perhaps the music ought more properly to have said, "Do your best," rather than "your worst." For on the following Sunday, at a Thanksgiving Service in the Anglican Cathedral, the

preacher gave us the information that we had made the war solely for the improvement and benefit of the Boers, and I could only hope that for what they had received the Lord made them truly thankful.

To occupy the enemy's capital has always been considered the chief objective in war, and when we slept in Pretoria that night after the occupation, many thought the fighting was over. I was under no such illusion. The very next day I wrote to my paper :

“ Kruger (if he has not already departed for Holland) has at least 15,000 men with him, they say ; he has twenty guns, nearly three millions in gold, and a religious conviction that God must of necessity be on his side. With forces such as those, it seems possible that the extraordinary old man may give us a lot of trouble for some time yet.”

For nearly two years longer he was to give us a lot of trouble—he and Louis Botha, who was in command of those 15,000 men that had escaped from Pretoria a day or two before we entered ; and De Wet, who was already harassing our lines of communication (not a very difficult task, for our lines from the Cape stretched over a thousand miles and ran through a hostile country). But my opinion, though justified, was very unacceptable to men and editors. The men were “ fair fed up.” As Thucydides noticed, it is always hard to get men to risk their lives if victory seems assured, and when within a week the order for further advance was given, I saw many break down and cry as they marched.

We were going out to the two-days' battle generally known as “ Diamond Hill,” a long and indecisive endeavour to cut off part of the main Boer force holding a line of hills on the Delagoa railway some fifteen miles east of Pretoria, and defending the retirement of the main body towards Middelburg, Lydenburg, and the unknown mountains of the Zoutpansberg, where savages dwelt. It was on the first day of this engagement (June 11th) that Lord Airlie was

killed, leading his 12th Laneers in one of those crazy charges against strongly held positions by which the cavalry sometimes attempted to justify their existence in that war, as I was to see them attempt it with more atrocious disaster along the Roze road in August, 1918. But besides the disaster of that charge, the points I chiefly remember during those long days of frost and burning sun and wearing hunger, were, first, a conversation I had with some of the C.I.V. (City Imperial Volunteers) as we rested in dead ground before the assault upon the final position, and they told me with pride that owing to the war "their horizon had been extended." This was likely, for they had all been bank clerks before they enlisted, and one of them, poor fellow! had his horizon either obscured or incalculably extended a few minutes later by a bullet in the brain. And, secondly, as I lay there, Ian Hamilton rode up on an objectionably conspicuous white horse, and recognising me from Ladysmith days, politely offered to explain the situation, as he was in command of this right flank in the attack. Leaving his horse (that was some concession!) he led me up to the summit of the ridge, and standing almost unnecessarily just on the skyline, he proceeded with his explanation, while I, in regard for his rank and his courtesy, was compelled to stand beside him, though shells and bullets were reiterating the most unpleasant sounds close around us, and I only longed to sink behind the alluring rocks. This I did the moment his instructive lecture upon tactics was concluded, and I heard afterwards that the next minute one of his shoulder-straps was carried away by a fragment of shell. How far he was conscious of fear at the time I could not say, but if he was conscious at all, he concealed fear better than anyone I have known. The third point I remember is my long struggle all the way back to Pretoria in utter darkness, through unknown and difficult country, leading my talking horse, who told me, in his considerate manner, that he was really very sorry but if I mounted him he would fall down dead.

So far as I was concerned, that ended the actual campaign, for the new editor would not believe my report, but, like most other people, thought the war was “practically” over, and recalled me to England, “practically,” with its ugly twin sister “virtually,” being among the curses of English public life. So I left Pretoria on June 21st and through intense cold rode to Johannesburg, where I was compelled to sell my talking horse, because the R.T.O. refused him a ticket. A war horse in Virgil wept thick tears as he followed his young hero’s bier, but mine showed more self-restraint and wept inwardly alone when I patted his neck and shook his solid hand for the last time. It took me nine days to reach Cape Town, but in that beautiful country of mountain and sea and flowers I was happy to be held up for nearly a fortnight longer. Almost every day I escaped from mankind far along the coast or up among the precipices ; but also I met several people of fame or importance, and wrote an article upon the “Lessons of the War,” which was published over the signature of myself and my colleague, M. H. Donohoe, who had also been recalled. Between us we had covered both sides of the campaign fairly well, and the article is of some interest now as a prophecy of the Great War, partly fulfilled.

We began by laying stress upon the necessity of having big and long-range guns. Our figures of range sound antiquated now, but our principle was right when we said : “It is absurd to confront a gun ranging 8000 yards or more with our own field artillery, which ranges 4000 yards.” On the other hand we admitted that our shrapnel was more deadly than the Boer long-range percussion shells, and provided our guns were quick-firing and of high velocity, they had an advantage. For the effect of the Boer guns was chiefly “moral,” and men grow accustomed to “moral” effects, but they never grow accustomed to their own death. We also inserted a paragraph in praise of our gunners, mentioning such examples of steady courage under fire as Major Wing’s 69th battery on Black Monday, Major



Abdy's 53rd Battery on the 6th of January, Major Connolly's 81st at Diamond Hill, and Major Granet's 62nd at Modder River. We then boldly dismissed cavalry as being entirely useless in comparison with Mounted Infantry, at all events in such a country as South Africa, and against an army of Mounted Infantry in which each man rode about 11 stone, whereas our "light" cavalry rode about 18 stone, and our "heavies" went up to 20 stone. We advised the formation of new and permanent M.I. regiments, but we admitted they would run up the Army estimates unless some at least of the cavalry regiments were disbanded. For the horses would need special training such as the Boers gave them, and trained remounts must be kept in readiness. We had seen the cruel absurdity of importing raw horses from the Argentine and Australia, and flinging them at once into the service quite untrained and hardly able to stand after the long sea-voyage. Thomas Hardy wrote to the "Times" in those days proposing that horses should never be brought into the firing line. The proposal was as lovely and futile as the Herald Angels' song of "Peace on Earth and Mercy mild"; but enormous as the slaughter of horses under fire was during that war, I believe it was far surpassed by the slaughter of imported and untrained horses which died before they could be of advantage to any human soul except the contractor.

We also showed how little chance our dogged and unflinching infantry had against a mounted enemy who continually melted away between their hands and vanished in the distance or the dark. To the astonishment of the world, our infantry would sometimes cover twenty miles a day, but what was the good of that when the enemy could cover thirty in half the time, and come fresh into action at the end of it against tired and footsore men? To say nothing of marksmanship, in which the Boers were trained from boyhood, and our men were in those days hardly trained at all. At the same time we pointed out the enormous advantage the Boers possessed in their instinct for taking cover, and

availing themselves of defensive positions, even when they were really the attacking or invading force, as during the early battles in Natal.

“ And here,” we continued, “ we must protest against an injustice still common with certain types of British officer and civilian, who deride the ‘cowardice’ of Boers for getting behind stones and never letting themselves be seen. The British Army is now doing its best to imitate the Boer tactics, to seek cover, and to avoid exposing men’s lives. The old idea that duty or heroism require an officer to strut about under fire waving his sword is dead. It received its death-blow when Penn-Symons was killed because he rode under fire with an orderly carrying a red flag on a lance, just to show that the General was coming. Officers now carry rifles, take the badges off their shoulder-straps, and look as much like privates as possible. An officer who exposes himself or his men to fire in the open is thought worse than a fool. The idea that it is a public service to get shot is gone, or it lingers only in the brains of ancient Generals, like the old idea that the way to take a position is to send men slap at it from the front. An officer who tries a frontal attack or neglects the advantage of cover, runs a good chance of being ‘Stellenbosched’ now. We have learnt the Boer lesson, and yet we continue to mock at the Boers.”

We then dwelt upon the tendency of people at home to think of nothing but the actual fighting, to pay no attention and give no admiration to the long and essential business of communication and supply. We tried to show the advantages of the new discipline—a discipline that allows initiative and complies with the true education of life—endurance, knowledge of locality and direction, of country and horses, and the use of dongas and rocks—“ the kind of experience that creates the instincts of common sense.” In those respects the Boers were far in advance of our ordinary men, for as Moltke used to say, “The soldier used to be drilled; he must now be educated.” Finally, we attacked the Censorship, though I admitted that I had at times served under model Censors, such as David Henderson and Major Altham. Still my description of the average Censor in those days was not overdrawn :

“Unpunctual, unbusinesslike, never present where they ought to have been found, irritable and discourteous, heartily despising the work on which they were themselves employed, regarding the correspondents as something between traitors, scoundrels, and bores, anxious only to thwart them in every possible way, favouring papers with whose politics they agreed, or from whose mention they might hope to get some advantage. We can only suppose that such men are appointed to the Censorship because they are obviously unfit to be appointed to anything. It might be of advantage to create a recognised corps of accredited correspondents, with a regulation uniform and a distinctive rank in the Army itself. At present a correspondent is treated as a civilian or as a soldier, just according as the Censor thinks he can do him most harm. It is always pleasing to soldiers to read a true and vivid account of what they have seen or accomplished, and yet the authorities do their utmost to prevent our accounts from being either vivid or true. Commanding officers of the future might make it part of their duty : In their appointment of Censors (and the Censorship is necessary in the interests of the Army and of the correspondents themselves) let them select fair-minded and reasonable men, with decent manners and some knowledge of the world, and if possible of newspapers and the meaning of words. Let them select serious and hard-working men of business-like habits, and not fix upon the first specimen of incapacity who comes along in search of a Staff billet.”

In those days, owing to the peculiarity of the country and the enemy, one perhaps exaggerated the importance of Mounted Infantry, and in the Great War, so far as I remember, they were not thought of, though Dismounted Cavalry were common enough. But in other respects, I think, the lessons of the Boer War served the Army well. And as to correspondents, detestable as their position was at the beginning of the Great War, it was incredibly improved during its course, chiefly along the lines which I proposed in that article, but also in directions for which I had never dared to hope. In the Great War, trenches took the place of rocks and dongas for cover, and the use of motor

transport, aeroplanes, and tanks (the most vital innovations of the war), which could not be foreseen during the Boer War, have had the effect of still further reducing the utility of the horse.

Among the people of importance that I saw during those few quiet days in Cape Town were, first, "Franky" Rhodes, who seemed an old friend by that time, and who took me out to see his brother's beautiful house at Groote Schuur, among woods and mountains; Sauer, I think on the whole the wisest and most honourable politician on the Dutch side in the Cape, and a true defender of the natives; Hertzog, again, the financier of the Afrikander Bond, who took me to his farm far out in the country; an exquisite Dutch pianist, De Beers, who ought to have become famous, and perhaps has become; and Rose-Innes, at that time Attorney-General, of whom I wrote in my diary:

"A fine, open face, with bright brown eyes, long downward wrinkles in the cheeks, a good mouth, very short nose, and short grey hair. Almost too open-minded for politics, but one of the best types I have met with out here; he was not hopeful of the future, but thought the native question more dangerous than the Boer; admired Milner's capacity and independence of all capitalist influence; talked very straight and amiably."

But I encountered another figure of far greater interest to me even than the pianist, or the Attorney-General. It was at a meeting of women—the first women's meeting ever held in Cape Town, I believe. The burning of farms and villages out on the veldt, away from the railways, had just been ordered by Lord Roberts, and it must be remembered that by Dutch law half the farm is the wife's private property; that the wives, especially during the war, had remained in sole control of the land, and had managed the children, the Kaffirs, and the cattle; and that most of the Dutch farms contained bits of furniture and other beautiful treasures brought long ago from Holland, and not to be replaced by any money. No wonder that indignation ran high. Mrs. Sauer presided at the meeting, and though a few English



women were present, the audience was mainly Dutch. The third speaker rose amid the breathless silence of expectation. I described her at the time as "a short, heavy, brown-eyed woman, but when she began to speak she was transfigured." Indeed, though she stood perfectly still, she was transfigured into flame. Indignation can make the dumb to speak and stones be eloquent. But this woman was not dumb, and was no stone. I have heard much indignant eloquence, but never such a molten torrent of white-hot rage. It was overwhelming. When it suddenly ceased, the large audience—about 1,500 men and women—could hardly gasp. If Olive Schreiner (for, of course, it was she) had called on them to storm the Government House, they would have thrown themselves upon the bayonets. Perhaps fortunately (I am not sure) she called on them only to follow her on a deputation to Milner. At that moment, I think, the spectacle of indignation rushing upon death might possibly have moved the English people to compel the reversal of farm-burning, and so have averted the subsequent abominations of the Concentration Camps. But I was soon to discover that, during war-time, hardly anything that can possibly happen will open the minds of any nation to justice or truth or compassion, and that discovery has held good in all subsequent wars. In any case, Milner refused to receive the deputation, and nothing was accomplished except an intensification of righteous and powerless rage.

Mr. Cronwright, Olive Schreiner's husband, was, I think, at that time in England, where he was received as people who plead for justice to the enemy always are received in every country. On the day following the meeting she invited me to call on her, and afterwards I made these brief notes on the interview :

"She has a finely sculptured head and face, a fine transparent skin ; fluffy dark hair in masses, which she keeps pushing back with her fingers ; straight, low forehead, quick-moving eyes, rather narrow than round, well-shaped and pointed at the corners ; nose also shapely, just saved

from Judaism ; firm mouth and chin, like her Lyndal's ; hands and feet small and delicate, but a little fat ; body short, and rather square. She speaks rapidly but plainly, with outbursts of frank and pretty laughter, not always over laughing matters ; showed no gesture of emotion, except in unconseious movement of her hands. But her words were full of emotion, and of conviction, too. She thinks South African men are more naturally free than others, and has faith in South African women, so grave and quiet. Had hoped the South African States would keep separate, each developing on its own lines, but the war will fuse Boers, Colonists, and Uitlanders into resistance to Capitalists and to English interference.

"She had never believed such a thing as the burking of the enquiry into the Raid possible. It had destroyed everyone's faith in English justice and honour. She thinks that England is degenerating fast, and wonders at the decline of social interests in the young ; all gone over to money-making. She bitterly laments the disappearance of the 'Daily Chronicle' such as Massingham made it, and she thought the paper had been bought over by a certain big Capitalist whom she named. She compared the Boers to the Dalesmen, as I had done myself ; and she sees little hope for England in the future unless the English people will conciliate them and grant them freedom. She hates Milner for his want of tact and knowledge. Yesterday he sent the police to refuse the deputation even before it asked to be received. She thinks he knows nothing of the Colony or of the Boers, and she condemns all the new appointments (referring to the appointments of Mr. Samuel Evans and Mr. Wyburg to important civil positions in the Transvaal). She thinks it impossible to keep down such a people as the Boers by military force ; they are not to be pulled or driven, but yield at once to kindness and civility. She told me many tales of English looting and destruction, especially near Jacobsdal. She noticed that the difference between this war and others was that we should have to remain in the country, soldiers and all, and not just to ruin and leave, as in Russia or France. She talked on these subjects for nearly two hours, in spite of a cough and deep, asthmatic breathing."

When I came to know her better, meeting her at various times from ten to twenty years afterwards, she had greatly

altered in appearance, and perhaps in disposition or intellect. The asthma, of which she died, had become far more serious, and there was little left of such feminine beauty as she ever possessed. At times her mind appeared torpid, at times embittered. But then again, her old and truer self would, as it were, suddenly rise to the surface, and in her wit, her passionate love of freedom, and her flaming indignation at injustice, one saw beneath all the accretions of life and disappointment the noble spirit that had written "The Story of an African Farm," and had contended, in the midst of every evil report, against cruelty and persecution.

When first I met Olive Schreiner, the city of Cape Town, like all South Africa, was split from end to end, and people faced each other in two parallel lines which seemed likely never to meet, though produced to infinity. It seemed a pity, as I wrote at the time, that with a certain Nordic callousness we have divorced morality from manners, though the Romans, I believe, used the same word for both. "We have so entirely divorced them that even a Press Censor or a Railway Transport Officer might consider himself a moral man." Those who kept saying that the war was sooner or later "inevitable" were obviously right so long as Dutchmen never spoke of an Englishman but as a "verdommte Rooinek," nor Englishmen of a Dutchman except as a "bloody Boer." The antagonism went far deeper than the wrangle over governments, limits of franchise, or even the possession of gold-mines. As I have said before, it was a collision of two opposite ideals. In the Englishman the Boer discerned one who was bent upon thrusting out the quiet Dutchman from his farm and crowding the blessed silence of the country with a blackguard crew of "Peruvians" and other mongrels. If anywhere in South Africa a trace of artistic beauty was to be seen, it was invariably Dutch. A pretty farm or garden, a building of any dignity, a work of any artistic individuality, was Dutch beyond question. But in the Outlander or Colonial Englishman the

Boers apprehended an encroaching wave of hideousness, pretension, and machine-made goods surging over a country in which they desired no change. They saw a race into whose soul the corrugated iron had entered, and whose dealings with neighbours of different birth were about as amiable as their barbed-wire fencing. In the England over the water they saw a nation that had cheered the Raid to the echo, and a Government which burked its own enquiry into the crime. There was no defence against that reproach. An Englishman who had farmed for seventeen years between Pretoria and Johannesburg told me whilst I was putting up for a night in his prosperous home, that he was emigrating to Argentina because he could no longer endure this unanswerable taunt against the English name.

On the other side, the British Colonial saw nothing in the Boer but a cunning and deceitful peasant, little higher than a brute. To him the Boers in the mass were dirty, ignorant, and incapable of progress. Hating them like serpents himself, he called them traitors because they did not love him. Loving society and music-halls himself, he accused them of disgusting habits because they preferred solitude. Liking, for his part, to read the "Cape Times" in the morning and "Tit-Bits" at night, he called the Boers hypocrites because they preferred the Old Testament. Instead of stamping out the acknowledged jobbery within his own Colony, he pointed at the notorious corruption among the officials of Kruger's Government—the "little souvenirs" and other forms of ill-gotten wealth by which monopolies and privileges were maintained.

So the two races stood in parallel lines, and spat lies at each other, imputing only all that is base. In South Africa the lie, like the swindle, flourished abundantly. Perhaps, as in the south of France, this fertility was due to the blazing sun, perhaps to the whiskey which townspeople began to drink soon after sunrise and continued to drink without haste and without rest till dewy eve. Milner himself spoke of "the bacillus of lying" that infested the country like



horse-sickness, and Sir Evelyn Wood's saying had already become famous : " You cannot live three years in South Africa and remain a gentleman." To express the state of feeling throughout South Africa in those days one might exactly reverse the advice that Milner had lately given in answer to an address of confidence presented to him by the Nonconformist clergy of the Cape. He advised the " Loyalists " in the country to display magnanimity, to recognise all that was great and admirable in the character of the enemy, not to crow over victories or to think evil of everyone unable to join in their rejoicings, but to treat the opposite side in a spirit devoid of vindictiveness or race-prejudice. Alas, for good advice, and the wisdom that utters her voice to the deaf ears of the man in the street ! Day after day I found both parties industriously disobeying Milner's instructions in every particular.

At last I was obliged reluctantly to say farewell to " Franky " Rhodes and all my other friends, and to start upon the voyage home. It was the happiest of all my happy voyages. I divided my fellow-passengers into the Aristocrats, the Intellectuals, and the Insignificant, and all three classes were delightful in their special manner. The Aristocrats included an insignificant Duke, a distinguished lady, an eminent Raider, and two or three others whose names I have forgotten. To preserve themselves as " Untouchable " by the Intellectuals and the Insignificant who had no titles, they carefully clung close together, and surrounded themselves with a zareba of chairs upon deck. There was one Aristocrat, however, who protected himself with no entrenchment, but moved about freely as any human being. It was the Duke of Norfolk, whom I had already met on my trek up to Johannesburg. He seemed to me a man of unusual good sense and amiability. His courtesy and friendliness with everyone won him such wide popularity that, in the usual fancy-dress competition among the male passengers, the body of lady judges unanimously bestowed the first prize upon him, though he went only as a common pirate, in no

disguise but a red cap and sash, whereas I, who gained only the second prize, appeared as "A Joy for Ever," in borrowed ostrich plume, leopard skin and all !

But I was most attracted by the Intellectuals, and certainly they were a remarkable lot. Chief among them was Conan Doyle, returning from service as a doctor with the Army and already far advanced in his "History of the Great Boer War." After our first meeting, I wrote of him as "a large, loosely-made man, with big grey eyes that turn on you when you speak to him with a trustful friendliness like a big dog's." Indeed, in voice and character he has always reminded me of an affectionate St. Bernard or Newfoundland dog ; and that, perhaps, was the reason why later in the voyage I wrote of him, "I should think no writer now has a finer, broader nature ; something like Scott's, I suppose." Most attractive that trustful friendliness certainly was, but I think it possible that the same divine quality in later years may have weakened his power (never very strong, as I was told by men who had worked with him)—his power of judging evidence, and resisting the wiles of conscious or subconscious deceivers in this or another world. At the same table with us was Fletcher Robinson, who had been out as a correspondent for the "Daily Express," and was famous as a writer and Rugby footballer ; a man of true literary power, fit to have told tales—the masculine tales—in Boccaccio's "Decameron." Afterwards he edited "Vanity Fair," but was too soon to die. A third was Francis Prevost Battersby, soldier, war correspondent, and so much besides ; among other things one of the best writers of short stories, of which he had on board an admirable collection called "Entanglements." About his writing, as about his nature, there has always been something of high distinction—something fine, perhaps almost superfine—and to be with him was a perpetual delight.

Those were the three leading Intellectuals, but attached to them were two or three men whose interest was strangely divided between intellect and horses—typical squires of the

best kind, who amazed me by the solemnity with which they discussed old hunting scenes, calling up to loving memory every copse and spinney and ditch and stretch of field—even the quality of the land, whether it was good “scenting country” or bad. I have often thought since then with what joy they must have introduced John Masefield’s “Reynard the Fox” as the one and only poem into the family circles of their dear old Halls in Midland territories.

Perhaps equally strange was the attachment to that circle of three feminine creatures endowed with remarkable beauty. One of them I called “The Child of Nature,” for she displayed an open-hearted charm and freedom of manner, consistent with the intention she announced to me of keeping a whole harem of husbands. The second seemed her very contrast in kind—self-contained, unemotional, virginal, demure, entirely mistress of herself; and yet she was the only girl who became engaged at least once on board. The third was only a child of thirteen, but so beautiful that the last mentioned, herself of great beauty, told me the sight of her took her breath away. And well it might, for, like Annie Laurie, “her face it was the fairest that e’er the sun shone on.” She was born in the Cape, protested herself inexorably “loyle” (as she always spelt the word), and hated the Boers with an intensity that brought flashes of red into her deep grey eyes. She felt a profound and uncritical admiration for all writers, and had already written a book herself, though she confessed to me that she detected one point of weakness in it. To London she looked forward with excited anticipation, mentioning most of the various sights she hoped to admire. But as to the British Museum, she did not care much for that. “You see,” she said, “I have a museum of my own—a Kaffir necklace, a Kruger coin, some shells and bits of gold quartz.” At Madeira she came with me up the steep hills, in a jolly-cart drawn by four bullocks, and as we rushed down again in the customary wicker sledge at an exaggerated pace, to which I urged the runners with promise of extra wine, “her joy,” as I wrote, “made her

pale. She leant forward with lips just open, the sunshine of her hair all a-stream upon the wind, while she just held to me for reassurance. Like other sweet and beautiful people, she did not trouble much about thanks, but took all as her natural right, the proper due of sweetness and beauty. She came back aboard like radiant summer with flowers and fruit and a gauzy shawl, all white. For this one day I think I made her utterly happy, and she will not forget that." Indeed, she has not forgotten it, though she has long been married and the mother of beautiful children out in the Cape. And so, with that pretty memory, this chapter would have ended if we had not found in Madeira a copy of a paper containing an appalling account of the massacre and outrage of the British in Peking by the "Boxers." The horror of it threw the whole ship into mourning, and many of us had friends or relations included in the imaginary disaster. It was not till we reached Southampton that we learnt the whole story was a shameless fiction, founded upon the customary chatter of Shanghai. Whereupon I took a vow never to read that kind of paper again, and if all good resolutions were as rigidly kept, the pavement of Hell would not be so thick.



## CHAPTER XIII

### INEXTRICABLE ERROR

*"Now if I hold my tongue, I shall give up the ghost."*—Job xiii. 19.

"**N**ULLAS numero horas," says the sundial, "Nullas numero horas nisi serenas," and I wish that I could say the same. It would be delightful to dwell only upon the interludes of happiness, however fleeting ; but even happiness is seldom calm, and the hours of serenity in my long life would hardly go round the clock. The next three years were variegated with brilliant, though rare gleams of joy, it is true, but the sky, seldom pierced with that sunshine, remained always tempestuous, and around the horizon darkness lay brooding, not at all like the dove. On the whole, I think, those three years were the most definitely wretched in an existence exceptionally fortunate in opportunities for happy energy, when compared with the lives of most men and women. The main cause of this wretchedness was perfectly definite, and that was perhaps some relief ; for vague unhappiness might possibly have been worse. But the remark generally offered to the unhappy as consolation,—“ Well, it's all your own stupid fault ”—only aggravated the misery, though I offered it repeatedly to myself, if only to save my friends the trouble. For I knew it was true, and the truth was the wormwood. “ It is all your own fault ! ” “ You have brought it on yourself ! ”—do the righteous really suppose that such reflections cheer the afflicted ? “ I have heard many such things ; miserable comforters are ye all,” said Job.

One need not now rake up an obsolete controversy and the ashes of indignant shame. All is over, and the opposing

passions which then tore England asunder have faded into history ; though if anyone gives a thought to the question, he generally now agrees that the abhorrent minority was, as usual, right. We have seen so many bloodthirsty controversies die away like this, that almost we may say with Browning's Luria :

*" If we could wait ! The only fault's with time ;  
All men become good creatures ; but so slow ! "*

Only, we cannot wait. Decisions must be quick, and results come slowly trailing after them. And because my decision went shamefully wrong, I became for a season like the Cabinet Minister on whom I once wrote some verses, each ending with the pitiless lines :

*" But now his soul lies mouldering in the grave,  
And his body goes marching on."*

To which I have found an unexpected parallel in the 33rd Canto of the " Inferno," where the body of Branca d'Oria is described as eating, drinking, sleeping and putting on his clothes on earth, while his soul is already tormented in the Ninth Circle :

*" Che per sua opra  
In anima in Cocito già si bagna,  
E in corpo par vivo ancor di sopra."*

So for three years I seemed to go about the world eating, drinking, sleeping, and putting on my clothes, while all the time my soul was plunged in Coeytus, frozen in ice, and gnawed by the hungriest of devils.

When I returned from my first journey to South Africa, the crisis at the " Daily Chronicle " office was already a thing of the past. It had been over nine or ten months. Massingham, who had raised the paper to such power, had been superseded by an editor who had previously held a position as assistant editor in the office. The rest of the old staff, almost without exception, had resigned and were scattered, some taking shelter, like Massingham himself, in the " Manchester Guardian," which stood as the City of Refuge

for the honourable journalist in flight from the children of wrath; and, indeed, it was almost the only refuge, for Chamberlain could boast that but for the "Guardian" and the "Morning Leader" the whole Press supported him. Amid arms not only laws are silent, but so is reason. Or, if she utters her voice, she is so hounded, harried, buffeted, mocked, reviled, persecuted, derided, and condemned that the reasonable man, if he is wise, will hide himself under the shadow of any inconspicuous rock until the tyranny be overpassed. The worst of it is that the reasonable man is often so unwise as to believe in reason as being the chief guide in human affairs, whereas she can hardly be called a guide at all. She rarely leads in ordinary life, and in war-time never. Fear, passion, hatred, ignorance, patriotism, profit, and love of relations all beat her easily in the race, even if she also runs. It was open to me to be silent, as others were silent, but I had not the wisdom. I felt like Job: "If I held my tongue, I should give up the ghost"; I should lose my vital spirit and sink into the lethargy which is double death. Still, in those days, comparatively ignorant of Fleet Street, I believed that reason had only to make her voice heard and she would prevail. Or, again, it was open to me to go out into the wilderness, following many friends; but the City of Refuge was crowded up, and there was no other place from which to make the voice of reason heard. What I still marvel at, some of my best friends, who were themselves haunting the desert, entreated me to remain inside their former fold, so that one reasonable voice at least might be heard from it. How experienced and high-minded men and women came to make such a mistake, I cannot understand; for to me their error is obvious now, and it was then almost fatal. All manner of lower motives, no doubt, combined with these to allure me down to spiritual destruction—my natural indolence and abhorrence of change, my friendship for two or three members of the new Staff, a pardonable dislike of "crankiness," and an unpardonable fear of hunger for myself and others. Besides, I always hoped for some

way of escape. Month after month I struggled for escape, and four or five times a way appeared to be opening, only suddenly to close. The final issue into the sane and sunlit world was three years in coming, and all that time I lay in hell, hardly allowed even such annual privileges of revisiting the upper air as were granted to Judas himself.

But, indeed, my private records of those many months sound such depths of misery that perhaps it is better to remember only the brief glimmers of alleviation. I returned to an office haunted by the shadows of former greatness when the whole Staff had worked together as one soul for the honour of the paper in which we gloried most when the enemy raged most furiously against it. The whole tone of the leading articles and their policy was now changed. Instead of attack, we had defence; instead of exuberant exaltation, we were chastened into soothing mediocrity; instead of battling against the storm, we were instructed only to "keep an even keel." We were neither for God nor for His enemies, though we gradually inclined towards the latter, as being always the more popular cause. To proclaim abroad the reversal of policy upon the burning issue of the time, someone had designed two posters that flared in succession upon every hoarding. One represented a yellow lion attacked by two little black wild boars, and contending against them with uncalled-for desperation. The other represented the same yellow lion roaring in triumph over the two little boars which lay dead and bleeding at his feet. I had seen one of those cartoons in Cape Town, and a typical Colonial Imperialist had said to me, "Look here! What are your people up to? You seem to forget that we shall have to live side by side with these bloody Boers!" Which was about the most sensible remark I ever heard from a man of his kind. I do not know who was responsible for the abominations; perhaps a man in the office who was afterwards murdered, I am sure for some far less serious offence, poor fellow! Certainly the new editor was not responsible, and his expressions of genuine regret unhappily



confirmed me in my disastrous decision to try what my influence could do towards restoring a finer policy.

To this hope I was further encouraged by the presence upon the new Staff of my former friend, L. F. Austin, and my new friend, Clarence Rook, both quietly indifferent to great questions of policy, it is true, but both men of singular sweetness, urbanity, and gently cynical humour. Another gentle and reasonable person, named Sargant, had also come as leader-writer—so gentle that I thought he would never turn in wrath, until he turned. But already the germs of fatal disease were working upon him, and though during his last fatal illness he was graciously set to write eight columns of "Obituaries," to keep his spirits up, he faded out of the world, rather rapidly in the end. Lipsett was another leader-writer, experienced in India, a reasonable politician, but far from being too gentle to turn. Finally, in April, 1901, E. T. Cook came as chief leader-writer, having just before been driven from the editorship of the "Daily News" owing to its purchase by the "Pro-Boers," who appointed R. C. Lehmann to a short-lived office. Cook was one for whom, like everyone else, I had felt extraordinary respect ever since I had known him as President of the Oxford Union. I had met him occasionally while he edited the "Pall Mall," the "Westminster," and the "Daily News" in turn, and my respect had always increased. I knew him to be a man of extraordinary knowledge, of sensitive justice, and capable of unusual generosity, which his natural shyness concealed under a frosty and even repellent manner. So warm-hearted, in fact, was the nature hidden behind that unemotional face and those chilling grey eyes that he allowed his feeling of friendship sometimes to influence his political sense, and even his sense of justice, as was seen in his unwavering support of Milner in the South African controversy. Yet, as I have noticed before, no one has stated Milner's and Chamberlain's case with more judicial fairness and generous allowance for the passion of national freedom on the other side. When such a man became our colleague, it was

surely possible for any reasonable man to stand at his side without shame, and even with hope. But for me it was not possible.

One of my delightful moments in relief came on June 19th, 1901, not long after Cook had joined the Staff. There was a great peace meeting—that is to say a “Pro-Boer” meeting—in Queen’s Hall, and a violently hostile crowd was gathered outside, filling all the streets of approach. It so happened that I went with Professor James Sully, the psychologist, and Mrs. Sully, a woman of conspicuous beauty, who never recovered from her savage treatment by the mob as we fought our way in. Notwithstanding these terrors, the Hall was crowded with a sympathetic audience, and Lloyd George, who was the chief speaker, received an inspiring welcome from all of us, since we recognised in him the rising hope of our defiant and rebellious party. His speech was one of the finest I have heard, and in those days he was exactly the man for the occasion—courageous, enthusiastic, indifferent to consequences. His eloquence appeared to soar ever upward and upward, like an eagle’s flight when he rises in vast and spiral curves. It was indeed a superb display of oratorical power, and the cause was great, the enemy only the more violent because half-conscious of their shame. When at last he concluded, and the whole audience rose in an ecstasy of applause, I hastened to emerge, so as to reach the “Chronicle” office in time for the night’s work. But the police stopped me at the doors leading into the little *cul de sac* at the back of the Hall. “You’ll certainly be killed if you go out,” they said. “I can’t help that,” I answered; “I have to get to my work in Fleet Street.” “Well,” said one of them, with sudden ingenuity, “I’ll tell you what we’ll do. We’ll pretend you are being thrown out for creating a disturbance in a Pro-Boer meeting. We must offer you some show of violence, but you mustn’t mind that.” So I pretended to struggle, and they did offer me some show of violence—a considerable show, banging me about the head and shoulders with all their constabulary

strength, and taking the opportunity to give vent to their political convictions at the same time.

Escaping from the shelter of their blows, I faced the tempest of a shrieking mob. Were they taken in by the ingenious ruse? Not a bit of it. As Browning said, "No Briton's to be baulked." They rushed upon me like a pack of hounds when their fangs are bared for the dying fox. In a moment my hat flew far over their heads, my coat was rent in half, my collar and shirt dragged open. With screams and yells they informed me that I was a "Pro-Boer," as if I did not know that already! Happily for me, they stood so thick that only a few could strike at once. In what appeared an infinite distance, I saw a 'bus going down Great Portland Street, and I savagely fought my way towards it. Clinging to its rail, I began to climb up, as to an ark of salvation. But thereupon the women seated on the top shrilled and cried, "Here's one of them!" or "Here's another of them!" just as though they had detected a bug or a flea. Indeed, if I had been a mouse itself, they could not have displayed more abhorrence and animosity. They struck at my head as it appeared above the level, with the handles of their umbrellas and parasols, in those days heavily weighed with large agate knobs. They spat in my face, and strove to wrench my fingers from the rail as I climbed. The Maenads tearing in pieces the enchanting son of the Muse herself were not more intoxicated with fury, and from that moment I never questioned women's political zeal and their right to give it constitutional expression.

Torn, bleeding, and but half-clothed, I arrived like a shipwrecked mariner in the office, and went into the editor's room to have my subject for a leader set as usual. Cook happened to be there on the same errand, and both he and the editor contemplated my condition with some astonishment. I explained where I had been. "You went as a sympathiser, I suppose?" asked the editor with indignant scorn. "Certainly," I replied, "and I have learnt how right

Ibsen's Enemy of the People was when he advised one never to go battling for truth and justice in one's best trousers ! " Cook turned away in pained silence, and I think the editor said nothing beyond suggesting a subject for a leader ; but, naturally, our relationship became more and more strained, and at length an unendurable atmosphere of mutual disagreement and suspicion was developed, affecting even the literary page, which I strove to keep up to its high standard of excellence day by day.

I do not know whether love is invariably mutual. A doubt is raised by the sonnets, " Then hate me when thou wilt ; if ever, now ; " " Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part," and by other famous poems of protest or despair. But still I am inclined to think that when love is profound and passionate on one side there is always some sort of return. As to dislike, hatred, animosity, and suspicion I have no doubt whatever. They are mutual without a single exception. Certainly the editor was not to blame. He had a different temperament from mine, and held a different view upon all vital questions. But those misfortunes he shared with the majority of my countrymen, and his task in " keeping an even keel " during a period of tempestuous controversy was undoubtedly difficult. The trouble between us arose entirely from my own initial error in remaining on a paper whose main policy I could not support with heart and soul, while at the same time I still knew I should give up the ghost if I held my tongue. I have known many journalists suffer like me from time to time, and when I hear journalists eondemned for working upon papers with which they do not agree—working upon Tory papers, for instance, when they were Socialists at heart—I wonder whether the outside " public " realises the anguish often concealed under the happy-go-lucky cynicism of Fleet Street. There is a tradition in Africa that the man-eating lion, when short of his chosen sustenance, bites his own tail off.

While thus extended upon the " torture bench " of self-contempt in daily life, I was engaged upon two books that



won a fair success, as my books go. "The Plea of Pan" was published in April, 1901, and "Between the Acts" at the end of 1903. Both were published originally by John Murray, who, together with his artistic brother Hallam, was rather friendly to me in those days, and, a few years later, Hallam Murray commissioned me to write a text for his excellent drawings of French scenes, thus affording me a delightful and solitary ride through France. In both my books of that earlier period I found some utterance for indignation—in the "Fire of Prometheus" of "Pan," and in "Vae Victis" of "Between the Acts"—and the qualities of both books were gallantly extolled or savagely condemned by the various critics, friends or enemies.<sup>1</sup> But to me the value of both lay in "confession," the inestimable service of which the old Catholic Church had discovered ever so long before Freud and his disciples revealed it to the psychological world, attractively spiced with "sex."

The same years brought me a few new friends and a crowd of new acquaintances. My work as literary editor opened to me a little circle of gay and witty people, including Clarence and Clare Rook, L. F. Austin, Lewis Hind, and a few more, all characterised by a delightful tolerance and an affectation of cynical urbanity. With them were connected the humorous and indignant spirit of Evelyn Sharp, who, though urbane, never affected anything; and Alice Meynell, the poet sober and austere, who in a seemingly affected courtesy revealed her true nature. And beside her were her sons and daughters, displaying a similar grace, not only towards herself, but, to my astonishment, even towards each other. Le Gallienne, also well known in that circle, sometimes came to the office, too, always amusing me with his solemn and serious greeting of "Brother Poet," though at that time I had published hardly any verse. And in the same years I became acquainted through Alice Bird ("Lallah") and Arnold White with Beatrice Harraden, already famous for her "Ships That Pass in the Night"; and through Alice

<sup>1</sup> The copyright of both afterwards passed to Messrs. Duckworth.

Bird with May Sinclair, then on the road to fame with her "Divine Fire."

At least equally interesting to me at the time was my acquaintance with Gordon Craig, who was living a *vie de Bohème* in company with Martin Shaw, now well known as musician and composer. We were all very full of "The Drama" then, chiefly, so far as I was concerned, owing to Mrs. N. F. Dryhurst's gallant and almost successful attempts to instil something of her own impetuous enthusiasm into her students at an Evening Class in a Highbury Board School. And there was Gordon Craig himself, living in the very midst of us, teeming with the ideas that have transfigured the stage of Europe—ideas on acting, speaking, management, and especially on scenery, which he reduced to that superb simplicity now imitated in Berlin, Moscow, Rome, and even in London by men who have fed fat upon his genius. With the support of his mother in "Nance Oldfield," he launched out into performances of Purcell's "Dido and Æneas" and "The Masque of Dionysus" (March, 1901), and the following notes that I made after witnessing the show one evening are of interest still :

"Ellen Terry as Nance was even more astonishing to-night than usual ; full of vivacity and new tricks of assumed vulgarity ; flinging herself about on chairs and sofas like a child ; full of quiet pathos, too ; the lovely voice so full of laughter and of tears. Both 'Dido' (which the people *would* call 'Dodo') and the 'Masque' went gloriously. Great beauty of the purples and greys and greens in the 'Dido' against the vast background of purple eternity. The music was lovely throughout, but richer and fuller of possibility in the 'Masque.' Daring colours and arrangements ; white figures and greys and greens, with but rare touches of red, the more brilliant for their rarity. I talked with Martin Shaw over the footlights, and at the end went behind, and was introduced to Ellen Terry in her room. She invited me to sit on her 'complexion' (make-up basket), and talked much of the necessity of Craig's return to the acting stage. She was very hoarse and tired, partly owing to the *matinée*. She said she had always refused to act twice ; even in America

she had never taken money for acting a second time, for fear of making a precedent. She called up the boy Bacchus (from the 'Masque') and gave him a chocolate bird's nest with sugar eggs, which she produced from goodness knows where. She called all the girls 'dear' and the aged tire-woman called her 'dear,' too. She wore a great white damask cloak and white lace over her head, the ends hanging down to conceal her eyes and face, which looked weary and showed wrinkles under the make-up. The beautiful long mouth is ageing, too.<sup>1</sup> But not for a moment did her charm and vivacity flag. She kept calling for her son, and parted from him with a double kiss. A pretty, modest maid was with her, carrying bags and flowers, and I conducted her to the carriage, holding a great basket of daffodils, she holding the roses herself. She gave the hall-keeper money, and with a kind word to everyone was gone. A model woman of charm and power mixed, charm predominating. We all drove home in one of those moods that make death seem impossible, I sitting close beside a lovely head in black scarf with berry beads; the long, thin throat, the exquisite soul within."

And next day (March 31, 1901) death, which had seemed impossible, came close; for I heard that my father had died—a man of an honesty unimaginable to successful people; and a humorist, too, in spite of his stern efforts after Puritanism, and his absorbing abhorrence of Rome and Ritualists. Generous beyond limit he was, and so tender-hearted that he resembled a Japanese of whom Yoshio Markino once told me—so tender-hearted that he always fished with a straight hook.

I think Gordon Craig's efforts to introduce beauty upon the London stage had only two other direct results besides the plays above mentioned—one a performance of Ibsen's "Vikings," in which his mother again gave her assistance, and the other an exquisite performance of "Acis and Galatea" (March, 1902), which had to be withdrawn after two or three days, I believe for want of money to pay the

<sup>1</sup> At a later meeting (after a performance of Laurence Housman's "Bethlehem") she suddenly said, "All men are fools about women! That man" (pointing at me) "is a terrible fool about one!" "But no man," I replied, "is a fool for loving Ellen Terry."

actors. Some years afterwards, when he was known throughout Europe, a great dinner was given in his honour, with Yeats and other sympathetic speakers eulogising his work; and about the same time he showed me, upon a little model of a theatre, his imaginative designs for Tree's performance of "Macbeth"; but, owing to some quarrel, even that work of genius was never seen, and all his extraordinary powers have remained a mine for others to exploit to their own advantage. In those earlier days Yeats was closely connected with him in mind, and the same love of the drama and beautiful presentation led me to meet Yeats as often as possible, and to attend his lectures and speeches, even on magic. From one lecture on Magic (May 4, 1901), though the greater part of it slid over me, I remember that, in answer to some question, he spoke of his own habit of vacillation—how when tortured by this curse he would try to cleanse his mind (I think by fasting and similar means), and when he had reasoned the matter out and made a decision in his best and purest mood, he never allowed any subsequent mood to alter his decision in practice, though his mind would often continue to sway. He also said, "When two are speaking there is always a third, and in every council there is one for whom no chair is set." This ever-present spirit he regarded as a real personality, which would go on living long after the council was dissolved, and to a similar spirit he traced the tendency of many people to write or discover the same things at the same time. Whether he mistook me for that invisible personality I cannot say, but for some years, after I had begun to know him fairly well, he always addressed me as someone else—some one with whom I was unacquainted, and not always the same person!

On another occasion when I was dining alone with him and Florence Farr, who was then giving exquisite recitations of his poems, I made the following notes:

"I was dull and frozen as so often now, but Yeats was singularly humane and clear-visioned, talking with wonderful insight upon ordinary affairs—politics, Ireland, the



drama, and even gossip. He told some grand stories of a fine old sailor grandfather in Sligo who had saved ships, keeping the crews quiet with an oar, and was loved by the whole country in spite of his abusive tongue. Also of his mother's father, or perhaps his own father, who said, when Yeats's poems began to appear, 'I have given a tongue to the sea cliffs!' He spoke, too, of a melancholic uncle who used to be a great hunter, but now thought it wicked to ride and yet was chosen judge at all the horse-shows, and whose one and unanswerable complaint at sixty-five was, 'My dear boy, in ten years I shall be an old man!' Yeats spoke of the old ideal of 'Magnificence,' or splendid personality, as was to be found in the 'Fairy Queen.' He talked of Milner and Rosebery as being 'heady,' meaning that their brains did not work better under excitement as Chamberlain's or Tim Healy's did. The 'heady' people have an imagination only for the moment, and no real foresight. He gave us a fine description of Healy at Louth, and talked much on Irish politics, deeply regretting the gap of ten years when the young men were turning to mere literature, and the old men were cutting themselves off from the generation."

After another of his lectures, I wrote, "Yeats has only to shake himself and all manner of beautiful things fall out." And as an instance of his courtesy I remember an occasion when, at the Irish Literary Society in Hanover Square, some of his poems were sung, so unintelligibly set to music that even he could not understand the words. Whereupon, being called on to speak, he at once devised the parable of a king who had a great palace gradually built over his head, until at last one day he crept out and sat on the grass, where his voice could be heard, while the palace remained standing just as beautiful as before. "All music," he went on, "is miraculous to me—the best and the worst the same," and so he gracefully escaped. And in another lecture, I think the last of a series given before the short-lived society called "The Three Kings" (May 29, 1903), he spoke of poetry as "a kind of ecstasy—the perfect utterance of the poet's life and true self." It must be spoken, he said, and all

inversions and difficulties must be avoided. Rhythm is used to produce a slight trance, and variations in rhythm to keep us awake during the trance. I remember what specially pleased me was his insistence upon "life" in a poet. Byron, he said, though he wrote badly, except in satire, was the last *man* who made poetry, and he quoted my own favourite saying of the Old Greek who said, "I am a servant of War, and I worship the Muses." Many other unwonted and beautiful thoughts I have received from that nature of radiance and obscurity so strangely intermingled. For whenever I have met him, in his room, or on trains, or even speaking at New York Clubs, that saying of mine has always proved true: "You have only to shake him and all manner of beautiful things tumble out."

In his attic in Woburn Buildings I once met the strangely irregular and self-determined writer Standish O'Grady, whom I described as "modestly exuberant; grey hair all on end, ruddy, and very Irish." Yeats admired him as much as any Irish writer, and half in fun called him "the Irish Ruskin," because he had a way of taking extravagant little points and preaching unexpected truths from them. In the same circle I also frequently met an exciting little person, Pamela or Pixie Colman Smith, a native of Jamaica, and I supposed touched with negro blood; for, seated on the floor, she would tell unknown negro folk-tales in a charming negro accent and manner. She could draw very beautiful and unexpected things besides, while Yeats would be speaking of all art as an infinitely delicate variety under the appearance of monotony in form. But another of the distinguished people I came to know in those years certainly did not belong to that circle, being of a different type, and engaged upon very different interests. He was the satirist, critic, and man of unrecognised science, Samuel Butler.

I first met him at an Old Salopian dinner, about a year before his death; for he was a Shrewsbury boy like myself, and he told me he had long watched my writing on that account. He invited me to his well-known rooms in

Clifford's Inn, where he lived for thirty-seven years when he was in England, maintaining a daily routine characteristic of his regular nature. The day that I first visited him (in July, 1901) he told me he wanted to hear about the war, and called in his trusty servant "Alfred" (Alfred Cathie) to listen. He asked me to explain the siege of Ladysmith, and, having cleared the table, I managed it fairly well with a few heaps of books for hills and matches for the guns on both sides. But we soon drifted on to Homer, and he said, in his half-mocking way, that he didn't care much about poetry, "except, of course, for just the very greatest poets, such as Homer, Shakespeare, and Hood!" I had foolishly thought him half-mocking in the same manner when he wrote the "Authoress of the Odyssey," but he was not mocking at all. He was absolutely convinced that a woman had written it. He told me the idea first came to him because Ulysses is represented as having no objection to making love to Circe though she had turned his comrades into swine. "Only a woman would have imagined that—an innocent, ignorant woman!" "Well!" I thought within myself, "I am not so sure. Given Circe, I could have made love to her, though she had turned all mankind into swine!" But I kept silence, being already in danger of offence. For a long review had appeared in the "Chronicle" upon the same acute book of criticism, and as editor I had not only written it but had headed the article "Miss Homer's Work!" I am sure the review was full of fine appreciation, but he was bitterly vexed at the title (I still think without sufficient reason) and he kept on repeating, "That does me no good! That does me no good!" So I was all the more delighted to read long after his death in Festing Jones's admirable biography, that Butler had been so pleased with my review of "Erewhon Revisited," some months later, that he could not resist the temptation of telling his sisters about it, though he knew any success of the book would only irritate them—a characteristic admission; for indeed, his relations to his own family were unusually disagreeable, as was

revealed in his greatest book, "The Way of All Flesh," published after his death.

Almost as well as about his books, he liked talking about his pictures, which hung thick on the walls—chiefly views of Italy and Sicily, beautiful, but showing a touch of the amateur in spite of his long efforts and training in the Academy schools. He also produced for my inspection a carefully-kept account-book or ledger, in which he had accurately entered the numbers of each book sold, with the loss upon each, and he assured me he never sold more than 200 copies of any book but "Erewhon" (of which he sold 4000), and that the total losses on his publications (for he was his own publisher) were £4,040. I do not know where the mistake lay, but from the "Biography" I gather that his losses amounted only to £900 in all, and that he made only about £70 off "Erewhon." Yet he was as accurate in his accounts as he was methodical in his habits—always brushing his hair with fifty strokes one way, and fifty strokes the other, and always smoking the same number of cigarettes each day.

Indeed, I was far more interested in the man than in his accounts, or even in the books themselves. He looked older than his age, but his face was still full of animation and intelligence. It reminded me of a Greek comic mask. The mouth opened like a comic mask, and the humorous or ironic wrinkles in the reddish face were like a mask as well. There was something of Socrates about it, something, therefore, of the satyr. One expected to see pointed ears covered with fur. And I observed the satyr eyes—bluish or grey, but very bright, gleaming with a genial malice or a malicious cheerfulness, but revealing the sensitive shyness and melancholy common to humorists and monkeys and other wild animals. The appearance of attractive wild beast was increased by the short white beard and the thickets of black eyebrow. He spoke with a gentle voice and the courtesy called old-fashioned in all ages, because good manners are always scarce. One thing in regard to him I regret very



deeply : if only I had known him twenty years earlier, I might also have known Eliza Savage, that wise and brilliant woman who loved him, and whom he loved, though never quite enough to be her lover. For she was lame, and far from beautiful, poor thing ! whereas his sense of beauty was keen, though austere. Speaking at one of the gatherings we have held to his memory, I once said, " He touched nothing from which he did not strip the ornament," and that is the best epitaph for any writer or artist.

In one of these years also (1903) I met H. G. Wells for the first time, for he came into the office one night with " his fair-haired little wife," and I just noted that he was " a very attractive man, with shy and humorous grey eyes." I had little knowledge then of his inexhaustible and devastating powers—devastating and fertilising, like the powers of a steam plough, grinding and eleaving along its way through stones and roots and flowers, remorselessly turning up the fallow, destroying the slow and sometimes beautiful growth of ages, and industriously fertilising the ground for future utility, that in time may possibly reveal some element of beauty, too. It was only long afterwards that I comprehended this, as when, at one of the vast assemblies during the Washington Conference of 1921, I realised that the small and inconspicuous figure standing beside me, far at the back and out of sight, was an incalculably greater force than all the orators, generals, statesmen, clergy, and innumerable cheering crowds celebrated by the reporters.

On one of my visits to George Meredith in his famous little house at Boxhill I find the following notes :

" May 19, 1901.—Cycled with Vaughan Nash through Leatherhead and Headley to Meredith's, and found the old man as splendid as ever—thick grey hair, white beard, one eye a little drooping, movement becoming impossible, and hearing very bad. To my surprise he remembered me ; the Greek campaign, the Ladysmith letters—he knew all about them. Converse was chiefly on Chamberlain, his aggressive nose and face, his want of temper, his probable collapse if anyone really faced him, his bad manners and ignorance, as

shown in his speech bidding France to 'mend her manners' — 'France, the nation which has given manners to all Europe, and is capable of the highest things, though also of the lowest!' He discussed the war, and thought he could give good guidance to anyone who wrote its history. He traced its origins from the Zulu War. Incidentally he much admired Massingham's Parliamentary Summary in the 'Daily News.' He thought the misfortune of England was that the highest class had never been a fine literary class, and so the whole country was materialised. He said many beautiful things about Greece and his worship of Greek thought. Unhappily, John Burns came in, brimming over with the exploit of motoring through Hastings and Lewes, all in two hours, as I gathered; as though there were anything heroic or even enviable in moving rapidly from one place to another. But as we seemed likely to hear of nothing else we came away."

My more intimate acquaintance with George Meredith, however, was due in later years to Edward Clodd. His invitation at Easter, 1902, began my long and happy series of visits to his well-known "Strafford House" at Aldeburgh, looking over the brown North Sea, stepmother of sailors, and to me always full of their bones; all the more since I once lived in the Gamecock Fleet of trawlers above the Dogger Bank. Clodd, whom I have described as "the friend of genius and the genius of friendship," certainly had an unrivalled power of gathering around him many of the most conspicuous men, whether of science or letters. On that first visit I found James Sutherland Cotton, once editor of the "Academy," and afterwards occupied upon his great "Gazetteer of India," together with Professor Haddon, the anthropologist ("Headhunter," as I called him for his explorations in New Guinea), one of my best contributors to "the literary page." That was a good visit, but of still finer interest was another (May, 30, 1903), of which I find the following notes:

"Reached Clodd about seven, and was much welcomed. Was almost at once introduced to Thomas Hardy; not a big man, nor 'virile,' nor countrified. Face a peculiar grey-

white like an invalid's ; indeed, he was just recovering from influenza ; skin like delicate wax, much wrinkled—sad wrinkles, thoughtful and pathetic, but none of power or rage or active courage. Eyes bluish grey and growing a little white with age, eyebrows and moustache half light brown, half grey. Head nearly bald on the top, but fringed with thin and soft light hair. The whole face giving a look of soft bonelessness, like an ageing woman's. Figure spare and straight ; hands very white and soft and loose-skinned. He was quite silent at first, sitting sadly and taking no notice of the converse. Then he began to speak a little, always with simple and quite unconscious modesty, attempting no phrase or eloquence as Meredith does, but just stating his opinion or telling some reminiscence or story—always a little shyly, like a country cousin among rapid Londoners. He talked a good deal about General Pitt-Rivers, his wife and daughters, such as Lady Grove. But he spoke also of early days in Dorset, when life was so much fuller and more various, chiefly owing to the system of holding cottages on three lives—'liviers' the tenants were called—which gave a permanency and personal interest to the place. Now the Cockney's idea that all country people are agricultural labourers is almost true. He himself was born only just in time to catch the relics of the old days.

"As I expected, he spoke much about the hangman ; also about the horrible scenes at public floggings on a waggon in the market-place, and how a cruel hangman would wait between each lash to let the flesh recover its feeling, while he squeezed the blood off the thongs ; and how some soldiers once saw this and forced the man to go quicker. Also how, before his time, little children used to be flogged through the streets behind a cart for stealing a penny book or toy. He had stories of magic as well ; the woman who dreamt another woman sat on her chest and clawed her arm, and the other woman came next day to be healed of a terrible red mark on her arm, of which she ultimately died. He wrote a story on it for Leslie Stephen, who, however, insisted upon having a material explanation. I thought I remembered it in 'Wessex Tales,' but am not sure. He spoke also of the custom still surviving that the man who kills a pig cuts out a nice little piece and eats it raw.

"This, of course, roused Haddon and the rest to scientific discourse on the rites of propitiation. For Haddon was

there, bubbling over with Primitive Culture ; also a fine fellow, Hugh Clifford, who has been out governing the Malay Peninsula for some twenty years—a strong face, with huge chin and bright brown eyes, talking freely and with power, full of knowledge and interest on all manner of strange subjects. And Flinders Petrie was there, too, with his Assyrian face, Oriental nose and eyes, skin and beard and manner—evidently Greek, one would suppose, though said to be a mere Scot. He speaks with high-pitched voice, screwing up one eye for emphasis. He has not much laughter in him, and sometimes sat mum as if contemptuous, though he talked well on the course of civilisation. He thinks the present is easier to understand than the past. Loves all history, and not only his own special period, and always stays awhile in Italy every year on his way to or from Egypt. He thinks we are now in a kind of Hadrian time, and a great invasion of Russians and Chinese mixed will pour over Europe, perhaps in the form of cheap labour, teaching us the uses of monotony. For he thinks the European is still savage in his love of variety. All this appeared to me hateful, but it was cleverly done, though without humour. Next day when up at Iken in the old ‘Lotus,’ Hugh Clifford told me of some Malay chiefs whom he had brought over for the Coronation, and how one day he found one of them tramping up and down his bedroom. ‘I am walking from P. to Y.,’ he said, mentioning two beautiful villages in his own land. ‘And now I am going up Koli hill,’ and therewith he panted and began to walk with effort. He had to be sent home soon after, for very home-sickness.”

For myself, by far the most vital external event in those years was the discovery of my son Richard’s love of drawing and capacity for imagining scenes in uncommon forms. He was then about thirteen and I recognised with apprehension that he would become an artist or nothing. With apprehension, because the life of an artist, as of most novelists and poets, is likely to be solitary, self-centred and isolated from mankind. Soon afterwards, most unhappily, I was induced to send him to a Public School for three years, and I might just as well have sent him for three years to hell. Once or twice I went down to play the displeasing part of the indignant parent, but it is useless to try changing



the tone of a school from the outside. I offered to remove him to Shrewsbury, where my old friends among the masters would have helped him, but he preferred to "stick it," and very likely the school was not in itself much worse than the average public school for a boy whose main interest lay in art. Indeed, one can imagine no more fatal characteristic for ensuring the contempt or detestation of boys and our ordinary masters alike. The drawing master, it is true, was enthusiastic, but it took the boy long to recover his natural high spirits and sunny temper. And it seems to me a terrible thing that any boy, however unusual and incomprehensible his inclination, should look back upon his school days with horror, and only wish to blot them out of his memory, after having in three years, at great expense, learnt nothing.

Two of my numerous visits to Ireland also fall within this period. The first was to witness a special Convention of the United Irish League (Dec. 11, 1900), when for the first time I met John Dillon, whom I have since always called upon with melancholy pleasure whenever I have been in Dublin. For no one has played a finer part in upholding the cause of Irish freedom—and of freedom for other countries than Ireland—in the past, and no one has stood as a more admirable but pathetic figure while the stream of political time swept past him. I also heard Douglas Hyde speak at the Gaelic League (of which he was the founder and the spirit), side by side with Kuno Meyer, the great Celtic scholar, and my friend of many years before. But the Convention itself was of wider interest, and I find the following notes upon the scene—still an interesting scene, though now so remote :

"In the Rotunda immense crowds of United Irish League delegates were patiently waiting by ten o'clock. At about 11.40 John Redmond took the chair, looking very like Cecil Rhodes, or the Emperor Nero grown to middle age. John Dillon and William O'Brien were received with prolonged applause. Redmond was an excellent chairman, making constant and occasionally successful appeals for order and dignity ; but the feelings of the delegates were

too much for them, though they did wish hard to be orderly. It seems that Ireland has subscribed £10,500 for the Parliamentary Party's expenses, something from each county. Dillon began by moving a resolution of sympathy with the Boers, and Redmond's brother Willie seconded it, rejoicing in the war that had cost England so much, and had united the Irish parties. Then O'Brien rose for the real business of turning Tim Healy out of the Parliamentary Party. He looked more peaked and pointed and savage than when I saw him before, and he had the manner of a man incapable of sweetness or laughter. He stood leaning backwards, as though on the point of collapsing before the storm of applause, and he spoke with screams and savage gestures, his whole body rocking and swaying and stooping almost to the ground; his thin hands violently striking together, the grey eyes glaring behind his short-sighted spectacles. To start with, he read out a resolution about a column long, as is the Irish way, and then, while declaring it was no personal question, he stormed at Healy, maintaining that the Party must never be handcuffed to their implacable enemy. Dillon made far the best speech on that side for sense and quiet conviction. On Healy's behalf Tim Harrington spoke very courageously amid violent uproar, and continual cries of 'Out with the Tims! Out with the Tims!' So did two priests. But for mere eloquence young Father Clancy surpassed them all. His speech was indeed a superb model of denunciation and invective: 'That Tim Healy, with one hand in Ireland's pocket, and the other at her throat!' with much in like manner. So it went on till past five, no one eating or drinking, or moving, except to shout the louder. In the end Healy was duly expelled, and so another leaf turns in the distressful history."

Yes, but not the last leaf in Ireland's history, or in Tim Healy's either!

The next time that I went to Ireland (Feb. 1903) my purpose was to study the difficult questions connected with George Wyndham's beneficent Land Purchase Bill of that year. I worked at them with the patient zeal of married Fabians resolved upon propagating a little Blue Book. I read innumerable Reports, and crowded my head with myriad figures of pounds and acres and percentages and

stocks. For many weeks I laboured at arithmetic in its most complicated forms, rejoicing beyond measure when two calculations which ought to have coincided exactly showed comparatively little divergence. And in the end I got the provisions of the Bill and its probable advantages to landlords and purchasers fairly correct, as could be seen in my article upon the subject in the "Contemporary Review" of March in that year, if anyone cared to look it up. But the statistics have now gone as ghostly as the cohorts of Assyria, and I care to recall only the personalities of the distinguished and lovable men who then gave me the generous assistance that the Irish people have never failed to give, alien and ignorant though I was.

Vaughan Nash went with me, being commissioned to write upon the subject for the "Daily News," and filling me with journalistic jealousy because I was either not asked or not allowed to write upon it for the "Chronicle," but went of my own goodwill as a private person. I had no great affection for the "Chronicle" then, but the sight of Dublin streets placarded with "Daily News" broadsheets announcing Nash's reports, while the "Chronicle" was blank, filled me with a loyal rage that perhaps only journalists can understand. Nash had enjoyed or undergone much wider experience in statistical work than I, so that it was much to my advantage that we visited the greatest authorities on Irish agriculture and land-tenure together. Such authorities were Bailey and Coyne of the Land Commission, T. W. Russell, Father Finlay, and T. P. Gill (of "The Department"), in whose room we were conversing when Sir Horace Plunkett came in—"benignity shining out of him," as I wrote at the time, "smallish, youngish, full of good purpose, and beautifully mannered." And there, too, came George Russell ("A.E."), whom I described as "Tallish, with loose-jointed frame, very striking and conspicuous in face, eye-glasses over dark grey eyes, red-brown beard, masses of darker hair hanging over his forehead, greenish necktie, and no visible collar." Certainly

one of the most remarkable men I have known, and a recurrent joy to meet whenever I have met him, which has been often, glory be to God !

R. A. Anderson, the persistent and courageous secretary of Plunkett House, so silent, and so admirable when moved at last to speech, we also met ; and one memorable night we went out to " St. Justyn's," at Dalkey, to see Michael Davitt, whom we found seated among earthquake piles of furniture and books, very friendly, very full of life, though his life was not to last much longer ; fairly hopeful about the movement, but, with his keen insight, detecting the error of handing over the land in small portions to peasant proprietors without retaining some hold upon it for the country itself. T. W. Russell we consulted two or three times ; for such arithmetic as Ireland possesses he possessed. I met him first at Oldham's " Contemporary Club," where I found a mixed assembly discussing Shakespeare and Bacon, as if the far more difficult cryptogram of Ireland had never existed ! But, though the connection was not obvious, I contrived to whip the discussion off to the Land Question, and T. W. Russell at once took it up and never let it drop again till morning, " speaking with compressed energy, jerking his words out with hands clenched and face twitching, a formidable little man," as I noted. Later on I thought him rather a sad little figure, with his white, wrinkled face and restless grey eyes ; for he was always dwelling upon his own complete change of opinion upon the Home Rule controversy, and, like most converts to righteousness, he was bitterly hurt at finding his honesty disregarded or suspected by the righteous as well as by the ungodly. Compared with him, Father Finlay was a refreshing spectacle—" a tall, big man, with short grey hair, large face, and very kindly eyes." He was a Jesuit, but was working heartily with Plunkett, and was even a member of the Plunkett Council. On the whole he was hopeful about the Bill, but especially he delighted me by his paternal enthusiasm for what he called " the industries subordinate to agri-



culture," while he described the fruit and enormous apples he was teaching his people to grow and pack. For what other purpose did all the Land Acts serve but to induce people to grow and pack enormous apples, or enormous cattle, or enormous cabbages, like the retired sage ?

In the following month I paid one of my very rare visits to the House of Commons, just for the sake of hearing George Wyndham introduce his Land Purchase Bill. It was a fine measure, and George Wyndham was one of the truest lovers of Ireland that this country ever produced, as indeed was proved by the political ruin that his desire for Ireland's welfare shortly afterwards brought upon him. But, unfortunately, the notes I made upon that significant occasion, though ill-natured, were brief :

" March 25, 1903 : Went with Nash to the House of Commons. There was a big crowd in every part. Chamberlain gave an answer on Trinidad, in singularly clear and carrying voice. But he walks just like Brer Fox—pad, pad—and has a foxy face, the eyes being singularly close together, giving him a deceptive look. Morley sat like a perky schoolboy ; C. B. like a blown-out doll ; Balfour with a baby face ; Harcourt like an elephant. Wyndham danced through his subject—all the involutions of Irish statistics—with fairy footfall, as Russell said. It was a most able speech, but too easily took all the good for granted. The beginning and the end were very fine and impressive, the whole House sitting hushed by the obvious sincerity of the man. And yet he is somehow touched, as it were, with a dash of the peacock. Redmond spoke badly, and so did C. B., Saunderson and T. W. Russell much better. At night I heard that Hector Macdonald, one of the heroes of Omdurman and South Africa, had just committed suicide."

Next morning someone wrote to me of "that unhappy Macdonald, who had in him all the elements of success—even success itself—and yet was overcome by the strange, unconquerable longing—one of those strange, unconquerable longings that drag the strongest of us into dark ways." And with that lamentable reflection this rather lamentable chapter of my existence may end.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE END OF AN EPOCH

*“ Die Zukunft decket  
Schmerzen und Glücke ;  
Schriftweis’ dem Blicke,  
Doch unerschreckt  
Dringen wir vorwärts.”*—GOETHE.

IN the spring of 1902 it seemed likely that I should gain my desired transference to the “Daily News,” on which A. G. Gardiner, my editor and admired friend in after years, had lately succeeded Lehmann. But the sudden dismissal of Herbert Paul on April 1st—dismissal by a letter left upon his desk after twenty years of constant service—altered both the situation and my own desire. I believe the cause was a violent article written by Paul in condemnation of Cecil Rhodes after his death, which had occurred only about a fortnight before ; but it was the manner of dismissing a man of such distinction and such devoted service that was horrible. I am sure that Gardiner himself had nothing to do with it, but there was a power on that paper behind the editor, as I was myself to discover in 1909. Massingham wrote to me he thought Paul’s treatment “shocking.” Vaughan Nash, who was present in the room when Paul opened the letter of dismissal, told me he felt as though he were witnessing an execution. Harold Spender wrote strongly advising me to remain where I was. So I thought no more about it, after the first disappointment of seeing another possibility of escape vanish like the rest.

But by that time it was evident that the Boer War could not last much longer. In January, 1901, the old Queen had died, uttering, as was reported, a lament over the war,

almost with her last words. It was natural that her successor, who paid such attention to ceremony, should wish to celebrate his coronation amid the rejoicings of peace restored. And it was well known that Lord Kitchener, commanding in South Africa, desired peace on terms, though Milner stood for unconditional surrender. So in the third week of April, 1902, I asked Frank Lloyd, the chief proprietor and active director of the "Chronicle," to allow me to go out again for the approaching Peace, and, to my astonishment, he agreed at once. I was even more astonished that the editor gave his consent, and in two or three days I was off once more to the familiar scene. The voyage was remarkable mainly for two delightful memories. In the first place, everyone was rather exhilarated, I suppose by the prospect of peace, and as there were women of conspicuous charm on board, the usual alleviations to monotony on the sea became so hilarious that the captain forbade the upper deck after sunset "to all passengers except those who wished to say good-night to the cow"; and, certainly, if "good-night" induces sleep, that horned head slept well. But, partly no doubt as a result of our kindness to that animal, towards the end of the voyage the atmosphere became so volcanic among some of the passengers that an explosion was only averted by our timely arrival at the Cape. The other delight was my first meeting with Josiah Wedgwood, who had served with the C.I.V., and was now going out again to act as magistrate in part of the occupied territory, accompanied by Mrs. Wedgwood, daughter of Lord Bowen, and two or three children.

I found the line from Cape Town to Pretoria defended by rather feeble entanglements, and by blockhouses at intervals of a mile or two, looking like little Chinese pagodas, and carefully decorated, in the British manner, with flowers, ironic names of blissful habitations, and ferocious dummies. Here and there I passed various kinds of camps—military, refugee, Kaffir, and hospital camps, like the one at Deelfontein, where my old Commanding Officer, Colonel Albert

Salmond, then lay dying of wounds, though his nurse, whom I happened to meet on the platform, said he was fast recovering. Passing the drift at Vereeniging, where I was not allowed to get out because the Boer leaders were there in conference, I reached Pretoria on May 17th, for the third time. There I stayed, anxiously watching from day to day the long-drawn-out uncertainty of peace. But I had the advantage of consorting with several men of distinction—Fabian Ware, then an official in the new Education Department for the Transvaal, afterwards editor of the “Morning Post”; and H. A. Gwynne, then well known as Reuter’s war correspondent, and one of the best war correspondents living, besides being the author of the letters to the “Times” signed “Camp-follower,” conspicuous for their wide tolerance and shrewd wisdom in estimating the South African position; afterwards he became editor, first of the “Standard,” and then, like Fabian Ware, of the “Morning Post,” as he still remains (1923) in spite of his formerly adventurous and wandering life. There also I renewed acquaintance with Patrick Duncan, Rose-Innes, E. B. Sargant, organiser of the Education Office, and Amery, who was for the “Times”; and there I came to know John Buchan, now famous as a journalist, historian, and inventor of irresistible stories; Lord Granard, afterwards to be my Censor in Salonika; Montague Bell, of the “Times,” and many others.

I have forgotten who gave me the opportunity (perhaps John Buchan, one of the cleverest in Milner’s “Kindergarten”), but one evening came an invitation to call upon Milner himself. So I crawled out of bed (fever as usual), and up to the former Residency in Sunnyside, which Milner then occupied. It was May 27th—only four days before the Peace was concluded—and yet he conversed with me long and with the greatest freedom. That evening I made careful notes of what he said, and now that more than twenty years have gone I may for the first time publish the following extracts without danger to anyone :



“I found him looking older, nearly bald, and deeply wrinkled. While speaking he moved his hands a good deal, especially spreading out the left hand with all the fingers extended. Now and then his face was sharply contracted, as though by a spasm of wonder or horror. He cannot pronounce ‘th’ clearly, perhaps owing to his German education, and it gives him a tone of weakness. He was not so polished and ‘superior’ as I remember in old days, and he spoke without eloquence, though fluently. He dwelt very much on the personal side of things, especially on his own career (perhaps this was because I had reminded him of Oxford days) and he described what a terrible five years he had been through; how he had been fighting all the time—with Boers, English, Colonials, everyone; how he expected to be flung aside (‘scuppered’ was his repeated word) soon after the war was over, and on this he spoke bitterly. He said he did not care what Rosebery said against him (in the famous Chesterfield speech, I think, of the previous December); he was well accustomed to that sort of thing, but he obviously did care a good deal. He longed to get away from South Africa, but hoped he did not let that influence his judgment on the Peace. In that he was not like Kitchener, who allowed his desire to have done with it all to drive him into concessions and terms which Milner thought unwise. He would himself have preferred no terms. To make terms with a subject-people was an illogical position. And there was the future danger that they would boast we were obliged to grant them conditions. Kitchener did not care a rap for the Coronation or the applause for making peace, but simply wanted to wind up the whole affair.

“Milner intended to go all over the two States, seeing to the settlement and the return of the Boer farmers under local committees. He did not think there was much good in giving the farmers lots of money, but he hoped for a sudden raising of the standard in every branch of life and science—railways, agriculture, and so on. The mines could look after themselves, but he wanted to see an overwhelming British population of settlers on the land. He admitted the difficulty of finding them, but thought it possible, though this was the last Colony we could ever found, because we were losing the colonising stock, such as the Lowland Scot farmers. He feared the Treasury would draw in, and allow things to fall back into the old rut.

“He thought the influence of the Jews in Johannesburg exaggerated, though he hated their way of making themselves prominent. ‘If you go into a crowded room,’ he said, ‘and find two Jews there, you come away saying the place was full of Jews.’ It would be impossible to govern the country long from Downing Street, though Chamberlain could be trusted always to take a big view of things, however much you might disagree with him. The great danger, he thought, would be the ‘buckishness’ of Johannesburg. His own main object now was to make the change in all departments complete. In Pretoria he had a better civilian Staff than at Cape Town, and with their aid he hoped to build up a new State.

“He agreed with me about the misfortune of black labour, and the consequent degeneracy of Colonials. As to the treatment of natives, he stood between Exeter Hall and the Colonial view. He would not grant equality or the franchise, but would allow them to own property, even in land; he thought it best to maintain native reserves, and let the natives come over to work in compounds, and then go back home. He much dreaded the growth of a drab, grey, or whitey-brown race, and would leave the native to his own natural culture, though he had not much hope of progress. He much regretted the opening of Zululand to whites. The native question was his greatest difficulty with the Boer delegates, for the Boers wanted natives without rights. They treated them kindly, like dogs, but would give them no rights or laws. He thought that Colonials would hesitate about the murder of a native more than the Boers would, but otherwise their views were much the same.

“He spoke a good deal about Joubert and Kruger, and said that at the Bloemfontein Conference he thought Kruger past his work, having become merely obstinate and stupid; but nothing could have made much difference in the end, though at first he did not realise how deep and far-reaching the cause of all the trouble had been. He asked several times about E. T. Cook; also about Massingham, and about George Cadbury, who he had heard was a very kindly and philanthropic man. And finally he told me to be sure to come and see him again when he was at Johannesburg. My general impression was of a perfectly honourable and very sensitive nature, rather inclined to introspection and examination of his own motives; perhaps inclined to exaggerate himself generally, like a man always standing

on the defensive, without the calm assurance and unquestioning belief of a born conqueror in his cause."

In peculiar contrast to Milner was Mr. Seddon, Prime Minister of New Zealand, who was making a sort of Imperial tour at the time, and one noon blazed upon Pretoria like the Imperial sun that never sets. The Johannesburg "Star," containing the speech of the previous day in which he had denounced as mortal sin any proposal of terms or conditions with the enemy, had been stopped by the Censor, so that the great man arrived in the chastened mood more familiar to correspondents than to Prime Ministers. But the sight of the Pretoria Town Council drawn upon the platform in tall hats, frock coats and brown boots restored his confidence. He was a "robust" man in every sense—enormous "figure" low down, huge head, large, coarse features, resonant voice, with a strong Lancastrian accent, and a habit of exposing his mind in public, draped only in the Union Jack. What I chiefly remember of his speeches on this occasion was his repeated assurance to all hated foreigners upon the terraqueous globe that the British Empire contained sixty million people like him. That stupendous fact gave me plenty to think about, even though at the subsequent banquet Rose-Innes, in the chair, reduced him to a few sonorous platitudes by a warning that it was not well, in a situation of much delicacy, to go trampling about and singing "Rule Britannia." That night Seddon dined with Kitchener, and one would like to know what that very different type of "robustness" thought of him.

Ian Hamilton occupied the next house to Kitchener's headquarters, and on his balcony most of the famous Boer generals and statesmen might often be seen—Louis Botha, Christian De Wet, Delarey, Schalk Burger, Lucas Meyer, and Smuts—hanging about disconsolately when no conference was sitting, either there or at Vereeniging. After the Peace was signed (at midnight May 31st—June 1st), I used to meet most of them in the Transvaal hotel, and

two days later Lucas Meyer invited me to his room. He was a very big, open-faced man, nearly bald, beard nearly white, eyes clear brown, with deep lines under them. I reminded him of the "Mournful Monday" on which he had turned our right at Lombard's Kop outside Ladysmith, and he said he thought that the finest battle of the war. The English had fought splendidly, clinging to their ground in spite of everything. But they were overwhelmed by numbers, and for the Boers it ought to have been a decisive victory. No doubt he was thinking of Joubert and his many failures to follow up success. He thought Colenso was not a battle at all, but a battue, and after Spion Kop Buller's army ought to have been annihilated as it recrossed the Tugela. As to the terms, he said :

"They are not so good as we ought to have got, but they are good enough. I never cared much about terms. We were fighting for our independence. We have lost that, and terms do not much matter. I tried to keep off the war by proposing a full franchise after five years' residence, in 1895 and 1897. If that proposal had been accepted, we should have had no war ; but people told me, 'You are giving up the country to the English.' Now we have lost our independence, but there will be no disturbance again. The Boers will settle down. I am quite sure of that ; and the last few years will gradually be forgotten. Of course we feel more bitterly against the Boers in your service, especially the 'National Scouts,' than against the British soldier. We have no feeling against him at all, and the other bitterness will pass away when we get back to work. As to the terms, the £3,000,000 (proposed as a sort of compensation to restore the ruined farms) means nothing to our loss. It would not cover the cost of the cattle. I myself have had seven farms ruined, and on two of them I have spent over £2,000. Altogether about 30,000 houses have been destroyed by the British troops. But still, if we had to surrender our independence, the terms are good enough. The future of the country now depends on yourselves—how you administer it, now that you have the power."

Three days later (June 6th), through Ian Hamilton's good offices, I received a command to call upon Kitchener



at his headquarters. On the way I met David Henderson, who was very friendly as usual, and very hopeful about the result of the Peace. When at last I was ushered into Kitchener's presence, I found him large certainly, but not so fat as I expected. His grey eyes were rather full, the left eye looking a little outwards, and neither of them very bright or impressive ; for which reason, perhaps, he kept turning his head away, and appeared to object to looking straight at me. His manner throughout was nervous, shy, and awkward. He could not decide whether he was talking to me or to Ian Hamilton, who was present. He kept his cap on all the time, hiding his low forehead. His cheeks were wrinkled, but rather puffy, and he showed two deep gashes from abscessed glands. The nose was short, and the chin large and heavy, a very deep cleft between it and the lip ; the mouth entirely hidden by the great black and grey moustache ; a slight double chin already showing. He spoke with much hesitation, and with long pauses of absolute silence. He thought the Peace was really pleasing to both parties, especially to the Boers, who were coming in well from Commando, but were, naturally, very touchy on what people said about them and the terms. De Wet had been very expressive in his loyalty to the change, declaring that a Boer must be one thing or the other, and now he was a British subject. Kitchener thought the Boers were a very strange people, with strongly mixed qualities, but hoped all would go well if the present feeling were maintained, and there came no frost to blight it. The enemies of to-day had often proved to be the friends of to-morrow. He praised the correspondents (rare and hard praise from him !), and hoped we would understand how necessary his recent strictness in the Censorship had been. Then he said good-bye.

On June 8th he held a grand celebration of the Peace in the big square of Pretoria. It was the usual sort of thing—cheering, hymns, a short address from the Archbishop of Cape Town, General Salute, a clerical procession to the

words of Kipling's tawdry "Recessional," and so on. Two points remain memorable to myself: one, that Kitchener insisted upon having "Nearer, my God, to Thee" as one of the hymns, and when objections were raised, he said he would have what tunes he liked on that occasion; and the other that when someone shouted "Cheers for Kitchener!" the whole square went wild. Helmets, hats, and caps of every cut flew into the air, or were waved on the muzzles of the rifles. The troops and people cheered as though they could never stop, and the shouting went on long after Kitchener himself had disappeared into the Government Buildings behind him. There stood the men who had marched so far and fought so well, and now the very end had come. Never again would they meet together for common service in battle or trek. The war was over, the dead were numbered, the task of the dear old Army accomplished.

Peace being concluded, I set out at once upon various wanderings of great interest to myself. I visited some of the Concentration Camps organised for the Boer women and children whose homes on the veldt had been purposely destroyed under military orders. The appalling mismanagement which had raised so just an outcry in the middle of the war had been brought to an end, chiefly through Joseph Chamberlain's energetic action, and the pitiful families were now living as decently and healthily as crowds of women and children can live in long rows of tents upon dust and withered grass. English teachers had come out for a year's term to instruct "the little barbarians" in civilised behaviour, and they described to me their surprise at finding the Boer children much sharper and better mannered than English pupils, far more anxious to learn, and not any more deceitful or wily (*slim*). Full of expectation, all the families were beginning to pack up for the long treks to their ruined homes, and only in one camp did I find any serious complaint. That was at Irene, within a short ride from Pretoria, and there the indignant mothers were raging

against a zealous young doctor who was forcibly promoting vaccination, which was mistaken for a Government mark branding the children as future subjects of the Empire.

This did not surprise me, for I had heard people at home objecting to vaccination on grounds hardly less irrational. More unreasonable to me appeared the mountains of oxen bones and skulls visible at various points upon the veldt, where our soldiers had slaughtered herds of oxen in the hope of starving the Commandos out. The military mind had refused the entreaties of the Boer women in the Camps to be allowed to make "biltong," or dried meat, out of the carcases, which were consequently left to rot, while the women and their families were fed upon canned "bully" from North or South America.

Another visit, of equal though sadder interest, was to the Leper Hospital due west from Pretoria. It was then in charge of Dr. Turner, an enthusiastic student of bacteriology and collector of bacilli, of which he showed me specimens enough to fill the world with plagues. There was one wretched Englishman from my own familiar Shadwell in the hospital, a hopeless case; but nearly all the patients were Kaffirs of one tribe or another. Some had lost their toes and fingers, some their eyes and lips, others showed frightful developments of the skin, huge protuberances in knobs and wrinkles. Some of the Kaffir women, whose hands and feet had gone, were none the less suckling babies. One little Boer girl, whose father was afflicted with the disease, had secretly been rubbing herself all over with his towel in hopes of catching the infection so that she might not be separated from him, and she was still being kept "under observation," to see whether her desire would be realised. But Dr. Turner himself was far more remarkable than his patients or his bacilli. He was a man of exquisite humour and indomitable devotion. He had even constructed a theatre for the patients and organised a band. He despaired of no one, except the faith-healers, who allowed no treatment. One thing I noticed against him: though he

washed me very carefully two or three times, he contented himself with just dabbling his own hands in carbolic or Condyl's fluid. As I rode away, his last words to me were : " Now, if you get leprosy within the next fifteen years, which is always possible, you will know the reason ! " More than fifteen years have passed, and no signs of the disease have appeared on me, but Dr. Turner himself, after he had retired and come back to live in England, died a leper.

A day or two later I set out upon a long trek with Josiah Wedgwood, who had to visit his future magistracy at Ermelo. He got hold of a waggon with ten mules, and starting from Standerton we made a royal progress throughout the south-east Transvaal, having a grown " boy " on the box seat, and little Piet on the leaders—little Piet, a merry Kaffir child, who kept falling off and having " terrible escapes." All along the way we met burghers coming in with their rifles, or searching for their families from one camp to another, enthusiastically assisted by the British soldiers, who loved to signal or telegraph : " To Meerbank Durban : is Mrs. Jan Breitenbach of Smutsoog there ? seven children " ; or " Mrs. Dosterhuis is in Barberton Camp, ten children living, inform husband." Fine and dignified fellows the burghers looked, as they rode past us or stopped to ask questions—dressed in worn and patched clothes made up of any old stuff (the finest suits I saw were made out of peacock-blue plush curtains). There were about 20,000 Boer families to be set going again among the ruins. The army did what it could—lent 2,000 waggons as transport, for one thing. But it was a difficult business, as I saw in the case of one fortunate family, which arrived at the old farm while I was camping on the veldt close by. The ruins stood among the South African weeping-willows at the foot of Elands Kop in the Komati valley. Up rolled the borrowed waggon, the slow oxen dragging it along the familiar road. As it approached, the Kaffirs came rushing down to meet it, dancing with wild gesticulations through



the withered stalks of maize. In front of the ruined house the farmer called to the oxen to stop, and like a ship casting anchor the waggon stood still. His wife climbed out at the back, using the brake-handle as a step. The eldest daughter followed. Four little children were lifted down one by one, and the man and the woman began to carry their larger bits of furniture into the roofless rooms, leaving such as would spoil under the waggon's hood. Then the man outspanned the oxen, and all the while hardly one word was spoken. One might have supposed they came back to a ruined home once a fortnight, or that they were an English family returning from a month at the seaside just in time for tea. Certainly, if silence is golden, those people were richer than all Johannesburg.

Two days' trek in drenching rain over high veldt like Yorkshire moors brought us to the ruins of Ermelo. The little town had sent about 700 men to Hans Grobler's Commando at the beginning of the war, of whom 400 had remained "in being" to the end. All the two or three hundred houses had been completely destroyed the previous September, with the exception of one house that still kept a roof, in pity for a sick old woman and her daughters, who were drawing army rations. The church had a roof, but all the woodwork of flooring, doors, and windows had been cleared out for firewood. The bank, hotel, post office, stores, and private houses stood in fragments of burnt and crumbling walls, surrounded with a wreckage of corrugated iron. Even the stone gaol had been blown up, and the ruins of the Court-house, which had pretensions to classic beauty, looked like a burlesque of Pompeii. Wedgwood and I drew our waggon close behind the ruins of his future Seat of Justice, as a shelter against the bitterly cold wind. Long icicles hung from everything that dripped. Snow fell softly on the hood of the waggon. The bits of iron roofs still attached to the skeleton walls groaned and clattered like ghosts in the blast. The ten mules tied to the dissel-boom whined and mewed with misery. My hands

were so cold that I could hardly cook. “ Here you are at last,” I said to Wedgwood, “ and perhaps it is just as well that there’s no place like home.”

After a day or two spent there in accustoming Wedgwood to his sphere of authority, we proceeded to the little town of Carolina, rather more ruined than Ermelo, since it had kept no roof at all, except the church’s, under which a large body of burghers were sheltering, fed and made much of by the Shropshire Infantry, stationed hard by. For our “ Tommies ” were resolved to treat “ the good old Bojers ” just as they would treat stray dogs or prodigal sons, now that all was peace and goodwill. Thence we passed down the Komati valley through a deserted and almost untrodden country, where I saw abundance of wild birds—tall tufted cranes, eagles of three kinds, vultures, two kinds of bustard, black turkeys with orange bills, large brown geese, innumerable duck and teal, blue-winged coots, bitterns, and hundreds of that devoted lover which, in the breeding season, grows so long a tail that he can hardly fly and suffers many risks and unspeakable misery in the one hope of pleasing his mate. So we came slowly, slowly through Maehadadorp, Dalmanutha, Belfast, Middelburg (where I found Padre Tuckey, formerly of Ladysmith, quartered) and back to the South African civilisation of Pretoria again. It was a fine trek, further enlivened for me by a telegram from my editor containing only the words, “ Avoid cynicism pessimism.” Fortunately, it had arrived at Pretoria after I had left, and so it was “ broadcasted,” as we should now say, by a diligent Intelligence Department to all the post and telegraph offices in the Transvaal. In consequence, whenever I arrived at such an office and mentioned my name, a Cape-boy’s negroid head would be thrust through the window, two great eyes, protruding with importance, would start from it, and two thick lips blurt out the bodeful words : “ Avoid cynicism pessimism ! ” And what secret meaning those faithful Kaffirs thought the words implied, one cannot guess !

On June 21st, I saw Kitchener depart and Milner duly installed with ceremony in the old First Volksraad as Governor and Commander-in-Chief, while Sir James Rose-Innes, in all the antique frippery of an enormous wig and judicial raiment, conducted the performance as Chief Justice. Then I started for Pietersburg in the Northern Transvaal or Zoutpansberg district, at that time inhabited almost entirely by natives, who were supposed to be savage and formidable, though as usual they met me with entire politeness and hospitality as I wandered far out among their kraals. They were not of Zulu stock, but more akin to Basutos, whose language they spoke without much variation. Like nearly all the African natives I have consorted with since, especially in Central Africa, they kept their kraals faultlessly clean, and the floors of their huts, made of cow-dung beaten and polished to a hard and shiny surface, were carefully swept. The huts were round, built of wattle and thatch and canes, with neat contrivances to keep out the sun and the cold. The simple gourds, clay vessels, and iron pots for common use, the beautiful coils of brass upon the dark necks and arms and ankles of the women would have taught our upholstered villa residents the real meaning of arts and crafts. I found the people engaged as usual—the women pounding mealies with wooden pestles in mortars of hollowed tree trunks, or threshing out the millet grain, or carrying in canes and reeds for building, while one of them beat a drum and all joined in a monotonous chant to cheer the way, and such men as were at home sat half torpid, sipping Kaffir beer, a slightly intoxicating mixture, almost as thick as porridge, and meantime encouraging female industry with lofty acquiescence. But the life was not really monotonous, for it was still varied by war, and natural desires urged the young men to labour at the mines, so that on return they might purchase women's love and service in exchange for oxen.

In this district I met a few shadows of mankind who had just come up from their scattered homes in the "Low

Country," lying to the south and east, and draining into the Limpopo, where lions and elephants were still common, but fever commoner than beast. English, Scot, German, or Greek, they were all brothers in the "Low Country." As I have often noticed in the Black Country and other abominable parts of England, the horror of their surroundings gave them not only a sense of brotherhood, but even a sense of pride. I saw a good deal of one Englishman, who had been driven up from the country by the war, and spoke of his home as a salamander might speak of a burning lake. He was a man of high education, deafened with fever, his eyes sunk and dull, his skin the colour of the dead, his voice like a ghost's, his body shrunk to a skeleton, his hands shrivelled to bird's claws. "Talk of fever?" he said to me proudly, "come down to the Low Country and I'll show you fever! Take quinine and you die of blackwater; don't take quinine and you die of malaria. There's a country for you!" He said the natives suffered horribly from fever, too, and in later years, when travelling in the most unhealthy parts of Central and West Africa, I found the idea that natives are immune to be utterly false. And yet all those "anatomies of death," as I think Spenser called the starving Irish, swore by their chosen land, and their one thought was to return and live once more in that diffused brotherhood of disease. Nor could anybody wonder at their choice who had listened, as I did, to their wild tales of savage men, and of crocodiles so hoary with age that reeds grew in tufts upon their backs, and of lions so crafty that the only way to see them was to wear a lantern in your hat at night and wait till two great eyes flashed its reflection back.

In Pietersburg, while detained by the Coronation ceremonies (postponed at the last moment owing to King Edward's illness), I had also the good fortune to meet two remarkable men of opposite destinies. One was Basil Williams, at that time one of Milner's "Kindergarten," and stationed at the new Treasury. Him I had known slightly before, and have happily known since at intervals in his



distinguished career. The other was General Beyers, who had commanded all the vast regions of the Northern Transvaal in the final phases of the war, as far down as Krugersdorp and Pretoria. He had thus kept up the connection between Botha in the east and Delarey in the west, and in co-operation with Delarey he was the man who worked our General Clements into so ominous a position at Nooitgedacht, in the Magaliesberg. Like all the Boer generals, he had a great admiration for Clements, especially owing to his skilful retirement on that day, though he said he could have annihilated the British force if he had been able to keep Delarey's men from wasting time in looting the British camp. He also told me, as others had done, that, though the Boers had some nickname among themselves for other British generals—nicknames never polite—they had agreed to give no nickname to Methuen. He was so chivalrous, so full of consideration, so anxious to spare the farms and provide for their families, that they agreed to call him Methuen, and nothing else. That was why, when Delarey captured him at last, he was treated with special courtesy; and everyone who has known that fine type of Englishman will perceive the justice of the compliment. Otherwise, Beyers thought French the most able of our generals, though he admitted Kitchener had ended the war by his system of blockhouses.

Beyers himself was a tall and handsome man, with dark brown hair, a long moustache, and pointed brown beard. His quiet, brown eyes, pale brown skin, and a peculiar refinement of manner suggested a Huguenot ancestry, as was common among the finest of the Boers. Before the war he had been a solicitor at Boksburg, and his demeanour and conversation proved the highly educated man. But he had strongly opposed the Peace, was naturally bitter against the Boer "National Scouts" ("Joiners," as he called them), and complained, also naturally, of the employment of native levies by Colenbrander, who had commanded against him in the Zoutpansberg. Evidently, he was likely

to prove irreconcilable, and so in fact he remained. It was with deep regret that I heard of his end, when, in the Great War, having joined the Anti-British party, he was drowned in crossing the Vaal.

Among other of my journeys from Pretoria at this time were two visits to Lourenço Marques on Delagoa Bay. As I went down the Komati Valley ("Valley of Death," as our soldiers stationed there called it), I became acquainted for the first time with the characteristics of low-lying, tropical regions in Africa—the peculiar smell of rotting vegetation, the moist atmosphere and intense heat, the interminable bush of stunted and poisonous trees, the brilliant birds and insects, the devouring swarms of locusts, thick as snow in a blizzard, the hornbills pursuing them, the white and languid figures of the few Europeans, and the pervading sense of pestilence. At Komati Port, just inside the Portuguese territory, I perceived an oldish, grey, and stooping figure coming out of a store or office, and shuffling drearily through the burning dust. It was Reitz, at one time President of the Orange Free State, when it ranked among the best-governed countries in the world; afterwards, in evil hour, State Secretary in Kruger's Transvaal, whence he issued the ultimatum of October 10, 1899. His battered brown hat and grey clothes were burnt and discoloured by sun and weather; his beard and hair ragged in grey tufts; his skin baked red as mine. But there was no mistaking the man I had known in the midst of his copious family at his pleasant house in Sunnyside—the deeply marked features, the slightly irritable look, the keen, grey eyes, with their dash of wildness and uncontrol. "I am sorry," he said, "but I don't remember you. I daresay you have changed. I have changed myself. Yes, I have changed, I have changed!" And repeating these words, rather to himself than to me, he got into the train, and left the South African States for ever. At Delagoa Bay he was the guest of the American Consul. There he embarked upon a grey German liner for Holland and, as he intended, for Sumatra

or some other Dutch Colony. He was a poor man, leaving with clean hands his many opportunities of dubious wealth ; and so, as an honourable and tragic figure, he disappeared.

In Lourenço Marques I felt almost as though I were back in old Europe again, for the place is pervaded with ancient history as with "pernicious fever." The brilliantly clad boatmen beside the little pier and out upon the huge triple bay, over which I sailed my boat as on the Mediterranean, were talking modified forms of Homer and Cicero, and their behaviour was almost classic too. But besides the leisurely delights of such a place, I remember with most pleasure my long conversations with our Consul-General, Captain Crowe, R.N., a fine type of the British public servant, large, powerful, full of accurate knowledge and good judgment. Unhappily he was already slowly dying of cancer, which he concealed from all the world. But his still beautiful wife, a Turkish woman whom he had robbed or rescued from a harem, had discovered the truth and mourned without ceasing. He explained to me all the difficulties involved in the Portuguese possession of a great harbour which had suddenly become the natural entrance from the sea into the wealth of Johannesburg. At that time a "modus vivendi" had been concluded between Milner and the Portuguese Governor-General as to the transport supplies and the control of the railway and Customs. The arrangement has no doubt been altered since, and I need not dwell upon it, but the other main point in dispute was the supply of "boys" as workers in the mines, and probably that still gives trouble. The "boys" numbered many thousand, and under the "modus vivendi" we had agreed to pay a tax of thirteen shillings a head as import duty. No contract was allowed to last for more than a year, and as a rule each "boy" came home every six months, like the "Kroo boys" on the West Coast. But if the "boy" freely renewed a contract without returning, we had to pay sixpence a month to the Portuguese as long as he remained

at work. That was all very well, but I had no doubt, nor had Captain Crowe any doubt, that the Portuguese obtained the "boys" by bribing the chiefs of the tribes to compel them to go. It was in fact a modified system of slavery, partly to the advantage of the mines, partly to the advantage of the chiefs, the Portuguese, and the French, who held most of the Portuguese debt. In Captain Crowe's words, "The Portuguese flag can bear it, but ours could not. The Radical papers and the missionaries would go out on the 'dear black brother' line, and all would be ruined." So he went on in his bulldog, official manner, interesting for me to recall, because it was then for the first time that I came across the Portuguese method of securing labour—the method that I was three or four years afterwards to explore in its far more horrible form upon the Portuguese West Coast and in the Cocoa Islands of San Thomé and Príncipe.

My other most interesting experience in that region of languor and deadly air was due to a walk I took out into the forest, north of the town. In a small but decent hut I there found the priestly Zulu, Mkizi, instructing a little black boy in the art of writing. He was a full-blooded Zulu, though the insides of his hands were light, the points of his fingers and nails reddish, and his tongue a peculiarly light pink. On his table lay a volume of St. Cyprian's works (whatever they are) in the original Greek, together with a "Vetus Testamentum" and the Vulgate. Other Fathers and Westcott's "Sermons" were included in his library. He had been trained at Lincoln Theological College, and knew all about Bishop King, though I think he himself had come under Bishop Smyth. He said he liked training boys for the Church, though he feared most of them would go into business. He took me to see his little church, with its brass crucifix and candles, I suppose in accordance with the Anglican ritual.

But what interested me far more even than his theological scholarship was his account of his own Zulu people, their



customs and beliefs. He said his people thought there was somewhere an unknowable God, "The Very Great," who had created the universe, and then let it go on without further care. Of Him mankind could know nothing. Grown-up people after earthly death lived for a short time, changed into lions, or the best of them into snakes, as I had learnt before. If a family is in misfortune, a witch-doctor names some ancestor who wants a sacrifice, and an animal is then killed, the blood of the liver pressed into a sacred bowl, which is never washed, and the blood left to stand all night. Then the whole family devour the animal, and, I suppose, the ancestor's desires are vicariously appeased. The worship of dead chiefs and distinguished ancestors is the real religion. The witch-doctor can also fix upon a man or woman who has bewitched a sick person (for death before old age is always put down to sorcery). The family ask him to "smell out" the guilty, and he succeeds by knowing the family history and following their applause. They sit round in a circle and say "Izwa ! Izwa !" ("Smell him out !")—with indifference if the witch-doctor is "cold" on the scent, passionately and with clapping of hands if he is "warm." If the guilty man is present, all eyes turn on him, which in itself must guide the magician. If he confesses he is killed, or, in these days, more often beaten and fined. The confession is almost always obtained.<sup>1</sup>

Witch-doctors can also foretell the future by shuffling knuckle-bones about, and the Anglican Zulu had no doubt of this power, attributing it to the prompting of evil spirits. They can also make rain ; really, he thought, by observing the heavens and the winds, and telling the suppliants to come again if dry weather seemed likely to continue. For a really good rain a witch-doctor would get two cows. Most kraals keep a priestess also, who knows the traditional prayers and goes round with a club, beating the huts and praying to the ancestors. When anyone dies, his hut is left empty for about a year, so that the soul may not be

<sup>1</sup> See my story called "Izwa !" in "Between the Acts."

interrupted in its transformation, but then it is burnt ; for if the spirit ever comes back, it naturally objects to seeing the old home in different hands, or smelling the old familiar smells.

Marriage, as I have often noticed, is by purchase, but he was very definite in repeating that in Zululand the girl's consent was usually required, though in the Portuguese country she was often bound with ropes and handed over to her future husband. He thought a real Zulu girl could never be married against her will, but a man might consult a witch-doctor to win her affection. Mixture with whites in Zululand was generally due to drink among the women, and for this reason the Zulus had petitioned the Government to exclude drink. But among the Portuguese mixture was common, though the children were despised and badly brought up. Her family might receive a woman who had lived with a white man, but the tribe never, nor would one of the tribe marry her, though marriage with widows was common, and widows cost nothing in the way of oxen or other currency. The price of a good wife in this Portuguese territory ran from £15 to £30, but it was much higher in Zululand. The bargain depended on family, not on beauty.

He said the " boys " did not like going to the mines under compulsion from their chief, but he thought the system not really bad, as it saved the men from idleness now that there was so little war ; and the really industrious always came home to enjoy themselves for two or three years on their wages, which he put at a shilling a day in the mines. His people were now in danger of accepting Christianity as being the white man's religion, without understanding what it all meant. He thought the best way was to begin with the Old Testament, and proceed very slowly. For otherwise it was impossible for a native to realise such a being as a crucified God. For himself, he admitted very humbly that he had lost half his congregation since his appointment, especially the women. I could not discover the reason of this loss, except that he was probably too highly educated for the

ordinary mind, and so, like a "high-brow" newspaper, he lost, as it were, his circulation among the vulgar.

But even in this disciple of Lincoln theology it was interesting to watch the savage Zulu coming out through the civilising dye. For whenever he compared his own country with the natives he was now living among, he swelled with racial pride, and I could well imagine him flinging off his white and priest-like raiment, catching up a shield of cowhide and an assegai with deadly point, and dashing out again upon the hated foe, shouting the name of Chaka or Cetewayo; as, indeed, he would have been rushing and shouting if only he had happened to be born fifty years earlier than he was.

Westward, too, I went out to Krugersdorp, and to Potchefstroom with its beautiful Mooi River, and to Klerksdorp, where the 2nd Mounted Infantry ("Catch'em-alive-O's!") were stationed under command of Christopher Brooke, brother of my old friend Willie Brooke, and therefore one of the family invariably known in the Army as "Smilers," because they all laugh like thoroughbreds. Fine times I had riding far and wide over the hilly or droughty veldt in those western regions, and watching the Boer families eagerly starting from the Camps, the women especially not to be restrained. But my frequent visits to Johannesburg are of wider interest. For the difficulty of labour supply was just appearing there—the difficulty which contributed to the fall of our Unionist Government about three years later. Kaffir labour was running short. Before the war, 140,000 Kaffirs had been employed in the city, 115,000 exclusively in the mines, and even then 20,000 more were required. But at the time of my visits (July, 1902) the total number in the mines had sunk to 35,000; only 37 out of the previous 75 mines were working, and they were short-handed. Before the war, 6000 "stamps" were pounding (a "stamp" is the steam pestle for pulverising the quartz, 5 "stamps" going to a "battery"), and in two or three years it was estimated that 15,000 or 20,000 "stamps"

might be used, if only the Kaffirs would come. They had various reasons for staying away, but the chief reason was the superb and lavish indifference of the War Office to money, except, of course, where the pay and gratuities of our own officers and soldiers were concerned.

During the war the Army had employed about 100,000 Kaffirs at the rate of £4 to £5 a month, with rations such as no native of Africa had ever enjoyed before. In Natal, at the beginning of the war, the current wage for a Kaffir was 10s. a month and mealies. I myself induced the best "boy" I ever had to face fire and all manner of hardship for £2 a month and rations. At the end of the war I could not get one under £4 10s. Most of the natives had gone home, bought wives, and abandoned themselves to delicious domesticity. But just at this moment the Chamber of Mines took occasion to fix the miners' wages at 30s. a month or a shilling a day. Harold Strange, chairman of the Native Labour Association, and a member of that Chamber, too, insisted to me that before the war, if a native got a nominal 2s. a day, he was in reality robbed of half in the form of passes, fares, and fines; whereas now the shilling would be his without deduction, and employment more secure. That was probably true, but no wonder the native argued to himself: "The British Army thought me worth £4 a month for the perfectly delightful occupation of driving oxen and mules. The Army fed me on real bread and beef. The soldier patted my curly head as though I were a nice animal. Now I am asked to take 30s. a month, with mealie pap and kicks, for going down a dark and unwholesome mine to sweat my soul out for millionaires. Thirty shillings a month! No, thank you! Give me back my grievances, as the white men are always saying."

Even apart from the wages, the manner of life was not alluring. The Kaffir miners lived in whitewashed huts enclosed in compounds. The huts had no windows. They were fitted with wooden shelves for bunks, one above another, four in each hut, and the "boys" supplied the



sacks for bedding. An open fire burnt in the middle, the chief object being to preserve warmth after coming out of the mine. In the central square of the compound was a common washing-place, and a kitchen where mealies were boiled and issued to the natives in thick slabs upon plates or in buckets. This mealie pap was the only food provided, and anything else had to be bought out of a shilling a day—and bread was sixpence a loaf! Besides, the “boys” had to provide themselves with some sort of clothing (usually sacking) for decency and warmth. As no native women were allowed, the usual troubles and perversions naturally followed. Some proposed establishing a women’s quarter, but Godfrey Lagden, Commissioner for Native Affairs, rightly objected, knowing that the quarter would become a den of harlots.

What, then, was to be done? Some advocated a conscription of natives for work as other ruling races conscript for war. But the word “conscription” in those days had an unpleasing sound in British ears, though, in fact, the supply of “boys” from the Portuguese territory was a kind of conscription, as I have explained. Others maintained that only white labour should be employed, and, indeed, on the East Rand mines, efforts were then being made to secure discharged Imperial Yeomen for manual work. About 150 were taken on at a wage of 5s. a day with food and board. But the expense was too great. Each Yeoman did no more work than a Kaffir, and when I saw those mines, only 40 men were left, and they began dribbling away under my eyes. The fact was that white men in South Africa would not do “Kaffir work,” that is, manual or bodily work. It was an unwritten but universal law. A white man could be an overseer or director of labour. He could “boss” up the native, but never put hand to work himself. He might be a storekeeper, a manager, a clerk, a horse dealer, a speculator, a merchant, or even a farmer, provided he did not dig. But bodily labour must be done by natives. That was the custom of the country—a natural custom in a hot

climate amid abounding natives. To a South African the sight of a white man working would have been as shocking as the sight of the House of Lords blacking their own boots would be to a reader of the "Daily Mirror" or the "Morning Post." Cornishmen ("Cousin Jacks"), it is true, were engaged to work the compressed-air drills and the blasting, but they received exceptional wages (from £15 up to £80 a month) for their skill, and usually spent about half the year at home in their Cornish villages. And it was secretly known to the Chamber of Mines that these skilled white miners had vowed to blow up any mine where ordinary white labour was employed.

On another, and far the most advocated, proposal I wrote to the "Chronicle" at the time :

"A larger number of the mine directors propose what is far more dangerous than the conscription of natives—a scheme for importing Chinese labourers by tens of thousands. 'We will lay them under legal restrictions,' they urge. 'We will insist on their return after their contract is up. We will keep them limited to the mines. We will forbid them to enter other trades. There is no alternative. We are up against our shareholders, and our first duty is to them.' But the last thing we want in South Africa is a fresh element of degrading admixture. As Lord Milner once said to me, 'What we must most carefully avoid is a mongrel population of grey, drab, and whitey-brown.' We should hardly avoid that danger by introducing the strain of yellow. As to legal restrictions, probably they could not be carried out. In Natal there were legal restrictions on imported coolies and Hindus. But now Natal is permeated by them. They rival both whites and blacks in every trade. It is almost a Hindu country. From the Yellow Peril at all events, I pray fate to deliver us. We have fought a great war for this country, and one hopes we are not going to curse it with a lot of Chinese for the sake of speculative foreigners who only demand big dividends."

To that article, written from Johannesburg in July, 1902. I see that I added the peculiar postscript :

"I have tried to state the problem as it is discussed

wherever men meet in Johannesburg to-day. It is the main subject of interest, its only rival being a dispute on the position of William Wordsworth among the poets. Our one morning paper is now devoting about a column a day to an eager controversy on the subject, and it threatens to divide the population like the parties of Boer and Briton. Ninety years ago our great-grandfathers were arguing the same question with equal heat. But they had not the advantage of living in the Gold Reef City ; so what could they know of Wordsworth or anything else ? ”

I do not know whether in that Gold Reef City the sloping ledge of quartz, full of invisible gold, is worked now in the same manner as then, but, as such things go, the process seemed to me in those days fairly simple. In the mines that I went down, the reef was about five feet thick, easily distinguishable, and extending about 1500 feet below ground. One of those mines was expected to yield for only eleven years longer, in which case it has, of course, been long extinct. At the bottom of the long sloping shafts I saw the Cornishmen drilling and blasting, in such haste for wealth that they did not stop to damp or spray the quartz, and so were laying up for themselves disease and early death from the sharp and irritant dust. The blocks that they blasted out came up in tubs to the surface, were thrown upon revolving tables, sorted by native pickers, and the selected bits flung into the crushing mills. Passing down from one mill to another, the lump was reduced and reduced till it came under the “ stamps ” of the “ batteries,” whence it emerged as thin sand mixed with water ; and this passing over mercury plates became an amalgam, out of which much of the mercury was squeezed, the remainder of the ore being smelted in retorts, which left it as a spongy sort of gold. This was melted down again, and made up into bars of 1000 ounces, which were the units of sale, and so were sent to the bank and to London. The best ore was expected to yield 15 to 20 pennyweights to the ton. About 2 pennyweights were allowed to escape, but there was a scheme for recovering them by going over the waste heaps again. Much

of the gold was so covered with pyrites that the mercury would not take it, and it was then passed through the cyanide of potassium process, or through cisterns of chlorine gas. One of the problems of the future, I was told, would be what to do with the immense refuse heaps accumulating in white or purple powder around the pits, but I cannot say how that problem has been solved. Probably when the whole reef is entirely exhausted, as perhaps it will be within the lifetime of the young, nature will set about her old business by covering the heaps with vegetation till they become the romantic haunts of playful savages housed in the city's deserted chambers. But it did not appear to me easy to fertilise that gritty and glaring powder.

Perhaps, for fear of sentiment, I kept my return to Natal for the last of my journeys. For nothing encourages sentiment so much as revisiting places full of memories when all is changed and the friends of old days are dead or gone. Such a scene is indeed a banquet-hall deserted, and it is best to hurry through it. So I started for Natal only when chilly letters began to arrive hinting at my return, and I rushed down through the familiar country, loaded with history as well as with my memories. For the first few days, Basil Williams and young Richmond, son of the painter, were with me, and we stopped at Volksrust to visit a certain flat-topped hill near there, a hill—"as many such there be"—rising about a thousand feet or little more above the average level. On the northern side it is burnt red with the sun, and is shaped in terraces, one of which rests on a rocky cliff, difficult to climb except in one place where the rock is worn away. A red, flat-topped hill, which, for some reason of their own, the Zulus called Majuba, it had remained unnoticed since the sun and rain and frost began to carve the African mountains into their present form, till suddenly, one 27th of February, it became famous, and the influence of its name could be traced in all the subsequent history of the west region lying south of the Zambesi.

We climbed up the thin path bisecting that northern face,



and it took me only fifty minutes. But be sure it had taken Joubert and his handful of volunteers longer that February night when they reached the summit just before the grey of dawn. In the shallow saucer on the top, I found the graves and simple memorials of our dead. On the southern edge I looked over the cliffs down which many of our men, startled and leaderless, leapt to destruction. Deep in the valley stood the group of trees where Colley lies, having wiped out in death the errors of a charming and unmilitary mind. I wondered as I stood there what the survivors of that small but ominously historic engagement thought of it—what Ian Hamilton thought, or Hector Macdonald, who was then still removed by seven months from the final tragedy which blurred his fame.

From there we rode out to Wakkerstroom, where the Commission that was to settle the new frontier of Natal was slowly gathering, much assisted by the Resident Magistrate, Captain Bentinck of the 1st Rifle Brigade, whom I described at the time as one of the most remarkable men in South Africa. So indeed he was—full of humour and resource, as when he induced old Boer farmers to read English by tempting them on to study the advertisements of estates for sale in “Country Life,” so that they would eagerly enquire, “Has it any boating?” “How about the fishing, or the hunting?” just as though they “entertained the purchase,” as house-agents say. Whereas he induced a bitter Boer woman to learn her lesson by warning her not to read a certain paragraph about some woman in high Society, quite unknown to himself, so that she kept reading it over and over again, and called in all her friends to discover where the impropriety lay—and there was none! Many similar shifts and devices he employed, being a man of inexhaustible spirit, checrily floundering on his way through a quicksand or quagmire of military confusion and imbecility. He must have been Walter Guy Bentinck, who bears an ancient Dutch title of Baron, but I have never met him again, the more’s the pity.

At Wakkerstroom I also saw two exquisite demoiselle cranes, standing in the marsh, and some beautiful purple and brown herons, very small and elegant, besides lots of ducks, owls, kohran, hawks, and the sort of turkey that the Boers call a peacock, just as they call a leopard a tiger, and a jaekal a wolf. Beautiful they all were, but how meagre compared with the beautiful beasts which used to swarm in those districts when first an old "Vortrekker," whom I visited, came there. His name was Uis, and he had come from the Free State with his parents in 1836, being the first to build in Wakkerstroom. He had fought against Dingaan and Cetewayo, and in all the wars with Zulus and British up to the recent war. He had been at Majuba, and had a son killed there. Still sane and hardy he seemed, though he thought he must be eighty-nine at least. On leaving him, instead of riding back to Volksrust, unhappily I undertook to drive a high, two-wheel Cape-cart to convey a Government surveyor, who had lost his right arm. But in going down a steep donga by a rough track, the fiery horses shied at a big rock on one side and flung the off or starboard wheel against a huge antheap, baked hard as stone, on the other. Very slowly, as it seemed to me, the wheel rose above my head. I had time to look up into the sky between its spokes, and then as I flew through the air, I cried aloud, "Good heavens ! There goes his other arm !" Happily, the horses, though wild, were Boers, and stood still, and so after infinite effort I extricated the surveyor, buried underneath the cart, but with his one arm still intact. I noted the event at the time as "one of my nearest deaths," but to the surveyor death came nearer still.

And late that night I entered Ladysmith again. It has been truly, if unkindly, said that, if the dead returned, their welcome would be faint. My welcome both from the townspeople and from such officers as were still stationed there was not faint ; far from it. Except sometimes in Ireland, I have never been received with such warmth of pleasure. And yet I was like one of the dead who return. I remembered

so much more than the people then walking up and down the familiar streets. The stones and trees and turns of the road were to me full of hidden significance which no history could record. Who knew or cared what those splashes of fading whitewash meant where the men of the " Powerful " marked their camp ? Or that hollow in the rocky hill-side, where the Manchester officers imagined a mess-room ? That crack in the pavement, I alone knew, was made by a shell that first passed through a mule. That round hole in the grass was the work of the comic old Boer mortar, almost the last thing we had strength to laugh about. That garden was still barren because Colonel Stoneman knocked it to pieces for his " biltong " factory of horse-flesh. That scratch on my bedroom door in the Crown Inn showed where Vallentin's servant was struck by a shell, and there he died hoping his master got his breakfast all right. That scooped-out hollow in the river bank, now overgrown with saplings, was where Maud and I hid Steevens from the sun and shells a few days before he died. History passes such things in silent ignorance. They are no longer remembered, and that was why I felt like the dead who return, for I alone remembered them all. And so it was the more amusing to meet at meals a chattering young man who had recently arrived from Cape Town and delightedly expatiated to me upon the course of the siege, the value of the Naval guns, and so on, never imagining or discovering that perhaps my knowledge was even greater than his.

I rode out to Spion Kop, and with Chawner of the Essex Regiment carefully studied that disastrous scene. I rode out to Nicholson's Nek with the same object, and to Bulwan again, and to Lombard's Kop. I went for a few days up to Harrismith, and saw the Drakensberg in all its beauty as I looked down its precipices from that side. I had a good time up there with the Staff Signaller, Walker of the Black Watch, and with Major Rose, a tough but dreamy man, one of those born artists who somehow stray into the army. He had used his artistic talent in making excellent drawings of



*Elliott & Fry*

H. W. N. AT FORTY-FIVE





birds, but also of a dead horse inside which a Boer had successfully hidden himself ; of a great ant-heap in which three of them had been hidden till betrayed by an unfortunate white patch on the breeches of one ; and of a pool in which a white-haired old Boer had sunk himself bodily, breathing only through a stick of hollow bamboo, which, unhappily, moved queerly about, and betrayed him. Having heard and seen many strange things, and remembered even more, I said a last farewell to my dear old Scot, the builder Cairns of Ladysmith, and slowly and regretfully made my way round to Cape Town. Whence, slowly and regretfully, I took ship for home, and now I suppose there is little hope that I shall see South Africa again.

But, happily, I was to see many other regions in this dust-speck of the Universe, and to visit many cities and many wildernesses, learning the minds of men and other animals. Macedonia under Turkish rule I was to visit twice, and Albania twice, and Russia in revolution twice under the Tsars, and Caucasian Georgia in suppression, and little-known regions of Central Africa, and the Portuguese Cocoa Islands, or Slave Islands, in the Gulf of Guinea, and the provinces of India, and Spain in revolution, and Morocco in war, and Bulgaria during the Balkan Wars, and Berlin when the Great War began, and France and Belgium and the Dardanelles and Salonika and Egypt as it proceeded, and France again as it approached its close, and Germany when it was over, and Ireland many times, and London at repeated intervals, and twice the United States. Of those visits and other experiences, such as my service on the "Daily News" for one turbulent year in Fleet Street, and my service, whenever I was in England, upon the "Nation," for sixteen years under H. W. Massingham, who created the paper and alone gave it value and influence, until superseded in the spring of 1923—of all these external passages of life, and of my share in the successful contest to secure a constitutional position for the women of the country, and in the unsuccessful endeavours to save political offenders from the gallows or

the cruelties of gaol, I may hope to tell in a future volume, if enough people seem likely to listen. But at this point the present volume may end.

For the end of the Boer War marked the beginning of a new epoch for myself—a new and happier epoch, as providing more freedom for the exercise of such powers as I possess, which is the very definition of happiness. It is true that for a time I still remained in subjection under the service to which I was then bound. But at the end of June, 1903, with the customary plea of “Staff reduction,” I received notice that I should soon have to go, “through no fault of my own,” and my joy at the prospect of losing a moderate competency was equal to the joy of many at gaining one. The happy release came at last by an unexpected beneficence, as when out of the eater cometh forth meat. For in the summer and autumn of that year, the Bulgarian inhabitants of Macedonia, crying “better an end with horror than horrors without end,” rose in revolt against the tyranny of Abdul Hamid, and accounts of Turkish repression by massacre and devastation began to reach this country. The Balkan Committee was established, with James Bryce, whose high qualities and achievements so distinguished a long life, as President, and, as chairman, Noel Buxton, already rising to distinction. A Macedonian Relief Committee was also formed with Bertram Christian as chairman, and Henry Brailsford, together with Jane Malloch Brailsford, was commissioned to go out as its agent, because both knew the country already, and were singularly well equipped by sympathy and capacity for the work. Suddenly, on October 15th, Noel Buxton asked me if I would accompany them, not so much to assist in the Relief as to investigate and report on behalf of the Balkan Committee. The offer came to me like the day-spring, and next day I said farewell to the “Chronicle.” My colleagues among the leader-writers and other members of the Staff said they were grieved at my going, and the office boys were grieved beyond question. So were the compositors, for, as I have mentioned before, I wrote a very

legible hand, and seldom had to alter a galley proof. I hate parting from friends, and even from enemies, for every parting is to die. But it was with a sense of splendid exhilaration that, on the night of October 18, 1903, I started for Salonika, and entered upon a new epoch in my life. Samuel Butler once wrote, "Behold and see if there be any happiness like unto the happiness of the devils when they found themselves cast out of Mary Magdalene." Well, I cannot say for certain, but I think my happiness was of much the same quality.

But the end of the Boer War marked the beginning of a new epoch for incalculably more people than myself. A new epoch began for this country, and even for Europe. Mr. Gladstone had gone four years before ; the old Queen had gone during the war ; Lord Salisbury went in August, 1903. With their departure the great Victorian Age, with its characteristic aims and methods, had ended, and new impulses began to make themselves felt in the protests, demands, and revolts of classes and parties little considered by our former politicians. The social stirrings perceptible in the 'eighties, but partially obscured by the startling artistic and Imperialist enthusiasms of the following decade, were again working like leaven in the lump. Having beheld, though from a safe and comfortable distance, the shadow of war's reality, our spiritual and literary guides ceased to simulate a brazen-throated exultation at the sound of bugles blaring for conquest, or at the grisly stories of natives transfixed by spikes of steel. Purged of those alluring phantasies, we appeared to be entering upon a beneficent age of prosperity and good-will. Here and there, it is true, one detected mutterings of storm—in Turkey, in Russia, and in India ; but the mutterings seemed a long way off, and when a storm is brewing somewhere, it is always comforting to count the seconds between the glimmer of a flash and the distant rumble ; for each additional second promises the added safety of a comfortable space. We know now that the hands of trusted statesmen were



beginning in secret to weave entangling coils for this country as for others, and that the patriotic activities of a "Peace-maker King" and a "Friedens-Kaiser" only complicated and tightened the bonds of their peoples, dragged year by year along a fatal road, as oxen are dragged yard by yard to the slaughter by a windlass attached with ropes around their horns. But at the end of 1903 these issues were hidden from our eyes, and the new century appeared to have dawned with the hope that accompanies everything new-born.

Though ignorant of the violent upheaval before us, we were conscious of a change. We were not playing like little victims, regardless of our doom. We did not play much, and the country fell into a serious mood. The flashing epigrams of cultivated levity were no longer heard, nor did exquisite seclusion invite to a cloistered contemplation of beauty. Now that the new century had begun, it was time for the "End of the Century" to expire, and we left the dead to bury their dead. The main character of a race changes little from one age to another, as every reader of Shakespeare knows, and if the 'nineties were rather exotic in their phosphorescent radiance, the established qualities of the English populace, never for a moment touched by that glamour, were now seen to reappear even among the tiny educated fraction of our race. And I suppose those established qualities to be a gravity mingled with ironic humour, a generous sympathy with misfortune, a coarseness softened by respect for decency, a general observance of law tempered by a general dislike of government, and a fierce assumption of freedom rather than a passion for liberty. Disturbed as the next twelve years were to be by many gloomy apprehensions and many atrocious events; abhorrent or cowardly as were the action and inaction of many leading politicians and intellectual practitioners, still the period from the end of the Boer War to the beginning of the war with Germany was, on the whole, an era of hopeful effort and emancipation from many customary

superstitions and habitual fears. Obstacles which had appeared formidable were perceived to vanish as we advanced, and now that so great a part of the world is confronted by obstacles more formidable still, we may gain reassurance by recalling the happy issue of our own adventures in other days than these, when, from the midst of passionate contentions, we could trustfully contemplate the poet's prophetic vision in the "Hellas" :

*"Heaven smiles, and faiths and empires gleam  
Like wrecks in a dissolving dream."*

Empires certainly have dissolved. Faiths, if wrecked, have been transfigured into something rich and strange. But all those common powers, more miraculous than miracles, which support our tremulously courageous belief that man has, after all, raised himself a little higher than his fellow mortals among mammals, birds, and fishes—such powers, I mean, as laughter, romantic affection, the sense of justice, pity, and a glimmering of reason—all these abide with us still, as vital as before.



## APPENDIX

### LIST OF WORKS

- “HERDER AND HIS TIMES” (Chapman and Hall, 1884; out of print). A biography of Herder as one of the Weimar circle, with many references to Goethe and other celebrities of that date, perhaps less forgotten than Herder himself. It was inspired by Carlyle’s early writings, and my consequent fond but genuine hope of discovering the solution of the Universe among German thinkers.
- “LIFE OF FRIEDRICH SCHILLER” (Walter Scott, 1889; one of the “Great Writer” Series). A biography, containing translations of the “Xenien” and parts of the dramas.
- “NEIGHBOURS OF OURS” (Arrowsmith, 1895). Scenes of ordinary life in the East End of London, the result of my long and intimate acquaintance with Whitechapel and Shadwell.
- “IN THE VALLEY OF TOPHET” (Dent, 1896; out of print). Scenes of ordinary life among the mines and ironworks of South Staffordshire, the result of residence among the miners, ironworkers, and nail-makers themselves.
- “CLASSIC GREEK LANDSCAPE AND ARCHITECTURE” (Dent, 1897); essays and descriptions to illustrate John Fulleylove’s sketches in Greece.
- “SCENES IN THE THIRTY DAYS’ WAR” (Dent, 1898; out of print). An account of the part of the Graeco-Turkish War in 1897 that took place in Epirus while I was there.
- “LADYSMITH” (Methuen, 1900). An account of the siege, written day by day while we were shut in.
- “THE PLEA OF PAN” (Murray, 1901; republished in the “Roadmender” Series by Duckworth). Imaginative pictures on some aspects of life.
- “BETWEEN THE ACTS” (Murray, 1903; republished in the “Readers Library” by Duckworth). Imaginative scenes and stories from my experience.
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